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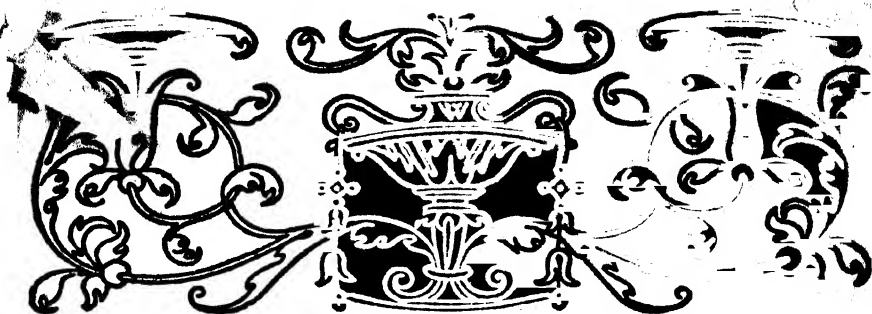
**THE IMPERIAL SHAKESPEARE**  
**IN TEN VOLUMES**  
**VOLUME VIII**

*The annotations at the foot of the page are intended to explain difficult phrases or allusions. Single words, which are no longer in common use, appear only in the glossary, which is printed in last volume.*

*The numbering of the lines follows that of the Cambridge Edition, the text of which is used in this edition.*







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THE IMPERIAL EDITION OF  
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
**SHAKESPEARE**

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND A  
GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY  
SIR SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME VIII

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JULIUS CÆSAR  
1583 HAMLET  
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA  
OTHELLO

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LONDON AND CALCUTTA  
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# **JULIUS CAESAR**

**WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY SIR SIDNEY LEE  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY BERNARD PARTRIDGE**





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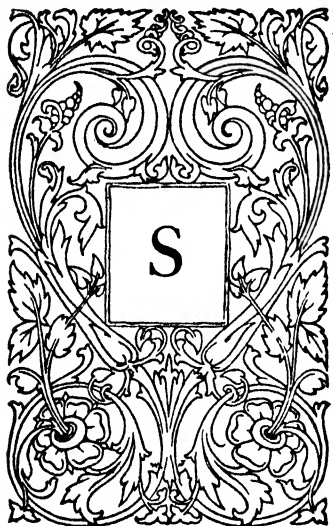
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## INTRODUCTION

### I



HAKESPEARE'S play of *Julius Caesar* was not printed in his lifetime. It was published for the first time in the First Folio of 1623, where it occupies the sixth place in the third and last section of "Tragedies." In the contents or preliminary catalogue of the First Folio the piece is entitled *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar*. The text itself bears the heading *The Tragedie of Ivlivs Cæsar*.

The play is printed with great accuracy. Textual ambiguities are few, and the editors of the First Folio may fairly be credited with enjoying access either to Shakespeare's own manuscript or to a careful copy of it.

There is no external evidence to disclose the date of the piece's composition or first production. Oft-quoted pas-

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sages from two contemporary poems of well-ascertained date are commonly treated as reminiscences of Shakespeare's tragedy, and as proofs that the production of *Julius Caesar* immediately preceded their composition. But on examination this testimony is seen to deserve small reliance.

A poetaster named John Weever, in a poem called *The Mirror for Martyrs*, which was first published in 1601, wrote these lines:

“The many-headed multitude were drawne  
By Brutus' speech, that Caesar was ambitious:  
When eloquent Mark Antonie had showne  
His virtues, who but Brutus then was vicious?”

Weever is credited with echoing here a familiar phrase from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. But another conclusion is possible. Unlike Shakespeare, Plutarch handles, very briefly and with comparative tameness, the contradictory effects of Brutus's and Antony's oratory, on “the fickle and unconstant multitude,” after Caesar's murder. Yet Plutarch by no means ignores the striking episode. He makes Brutus first address the populace in the Capitol in order “to win the favour of the people and to justify that they had done.” Then, “very honourably attended,” the leader of the conspirators is presented as speaking from the rostrum in the Forum, where the crowd “for the reverence they bare unto Brutus kept silence to hear what he would say.” Subsequently, in Plutarch as in Shakespeare, Brutus gives place to Antony who harangues the mob from the same platform. Antony, according to his Greek biographer,

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by skilfully “amplifying of matters, did greatly move [his hearers’] hearts and affections unto pity and compassion,” with such effect that the people of Rome riotously abjured Brutus and his party. Plutarch imputes to Caesar the ambitious pursuit of the kingly crown with little less emphasis than Shakespeare. Weever’s slender reference to the theme might, on a very modest estimate of his inventiveness, well echo Plutarch to the exclusion of Shakespeare. At any rate Weever’s lines are an unsubstantial foundation on which to build a theory that he was echoing Shakespeare’s inspiring oratory at Caesar’s funeral.

Even less can be said for the like suggestion that a passage in a poem by Drayton, which was penned in 1603 within two years of the appearance of Weever’s lines, attests Drayton’s acquaintance at that date with Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. Drayton, in 1596, brought out his *Mortimeriados*, a long epic eulogy of Roger Mortimer, the champion of the barons against Edward II. In 1603 he republished the poem under the title *The Barrons Wars*, with revisions and additions. In the expanded description of the hero’s character the poet described Mortimer (for the first time in 1603) as one

“In whome in peace th’ elements all lay  
So mixt, as none could soueraignty impute . . .  
That ’t seemed, when Heaven his modell first began,  
In him it showd perfection in a man.”

It is suggested that Drayton adapted these lines from the elegy on Brutus in *Julius Caesar* (V, v, 73–76).

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“His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, This was a man.”

But the general notion that perfection in man springs from mixture of the elements in due proportions is clothed in very similar language by authors who wrote before either Shakespeare or Drayton. Ben Jonson, for example in *Cynthia's Revels*, which was acted and published in 1600, had written of one “in whom the humours and elements are peaceably met, without emulation of precedencie; . . . in all, so compos'd and order'd, as it is cleare, Nature went about some full work, she did more than make a man, when she made him” (Act II, Sc. iii). So many pre-existent sources for Drayton's panegyric were available that there is no ground for assuming that he sought inspiration from Shakespeare's play.

To internal evidence alone must recourse be had in order to determine the period in Shakespeare's career to which the piece belongs. Even the internal testimony is less definite than could be wished. But the firmness with which the leading characters are delineated, the care bestowed on the construction, the convincing pertinence of the thought and language, — all prove that Shakespeare's powers, when *Julius Caesar* was written, had ripened into a virility which carried them within measurable distance of their last stage of perfection. These are plain signs that the last stage had not been reached, but there is no mark of immaturity, no faltering of the firm master-hand.

The characteristics of the metre and the mode in

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which prose is employed equally dissociate this Roman tragedy from Shakespeare's early and from his latest efforts. In his early work the metrical laws are obeyed more strictly, while prose usually figures more sparingly, and almost exclusively in comic or frivolous dialogue. In the latest work the metrical license is greater, while there is a more liberal supply and more varied application of prose. Throughout *Julius Caesar* the metre is freely handled, but the violent irregularities of the final stage of Shakespeare's art are absent. Prose is infrequent and is mainly employed in the less dignified incident, as in the youthful plays. But Shakespeare betrays his ageing hand by making prose the vehicle of Brutus's studied oratory in the great scene of the Forum. Thereby a masterly contrast is contrived with the verse of Antony's more incisive and more moving rhetoric in the same environment.

By all these tokens *Julius Caesar* is brought into near relation with the full development of English-history drama in *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, and with that trilogy of perfected romance *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*. The internal evidence in fact fully supports the inference that *Julius Caesar* followed at no long interval *As You Like It*, and immediately preceded the great achievement of *Hamlet*. With the hero of the latter tragedy Brutus has obvious kinship, though the habits of introspection which are put to the credit of the Roman conspirator are more subtly portrayed in the Dane. *Hamlet* marks a measure of advance on *Julius Caesar* in the sustained vivacity of characterisation, and to a smaller degree in metrical



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facility. According to unquestionable external evidence, *Hamlet* was produced in 1603. *Julius Caesar* may be safely assigned to the middle period of 1601 or to the early months of 1602.

### II

*Julius Caesar* is Shakespeare's earliest essay in the dramatisation of a genuine theme of Roman history. But there is evidence that the glory of ancient Rome had enthralled Shakespeare very early in his life. The fabulous legend of Tarquin's ravishment of Lucrece, which the genius of Livy and Ovid had vivified, was the subject of his second narrative poem. The tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*, to which in all probability he merely lent a revising pen, dealt with an imaginary episode of imperial Rome in decadence. Elsewhere in the early plays there are passing allusions to Julius Caesar, who was universally acknowledged to be the Colossus of Roman history. In *Henry VI*, Caesar's assassination is mentioned twice (2 *Hen. VI*, IV, i; 3 *Hen. VI*, V, v). In *Richard III* (III, i, 84-88) the fable that Julius Caesar built the Tower of London is discussed, and an eulogy is pronounced on the hero, both as a writer and a general.

“That Julius Caesar was a famous man:  
With what his valour did enrich his wit  
His wit set down to make his valour live.  
Death makes no conquest of this conqueror,  
For now he lives in fame, though not in life.”

Twice in later plays, 2 *Henry IV* and *As You Like It*, quotation is made with somewhat ironical comment of

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Caesar's proud apophthegm "Veni, vidi, vici." Work which followed *Julius Caesar* betrays ample signs of Shakespeare's familiarity not only with Caesar but with many another leading name in Roman history; that circumstance, however, lacks pertinence to the present issue.

It was not until Shakespeare had acquainted himself with Plutarch's *Lives* that he realised the richness of the material which Roman history offered a dramatist, and there is no sign that Shakespeare had studied Plutarch with any minuteness before he wrote *Julius Caesar*. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* possibly betrays some knowledge of Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*. But Shakespeare makes slender use of Plutarch's work in that ethereal play of fancy. It was in *Julius Caesar* that he for the first time reared on foundations exclusively laid by the Greek biographer a dramatic study of life. It was an appropriate season in his career to make the experiment. He had recently brought to a close an impressive series of plays — tragedies for the most part — on topics of English history drawn from Holinshed's *Chronicles*. His hand was well exercised in the use of historical authorities. Passing political events like the conspiracy and fall of the Earl of Essex rendered the temper of the public responsive, too, to the mimic stir of so momentous a revolution as that which turned the Republic of Rome into the Empire. Shakespeare's first essay in the dramatisation of Roman history promised on a priori grounds the success which it achieved. It was not long suffered to stand alone. *Julius Caesar* was the first piece in a trilogy of surpassing grandeur, of

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which the second and third instalments were *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.

No depreciation of the working of Shakespeare's genius attends a frank recognition of the large debt which his Roman plays owe to Plutarch's suggestion. The Greek biographer is worthy of his disciple. It is Plutarch's glory to have placed biography in the category of the literary arts. His method may not at the first glance promise any very pregnant result. He is in essence an anecdotal gossip. He loves to accumulate microscopic particulars of men's lives, the smallest traits of character, the least apparently impressive habits. But he arranged his ample and seemingly trivial details with so magical a skill as to evolve a speaking likeness of his chosen heroes, all of whom were of dignified stature. His work made a wide and an enduring appeal, and the unlettered reader has always proved as enthusiastic an admirer of its worth as the scholar. Shakespeare's observant eye summarily detected in Plutarch's plays a stimulating source of inspiration.

Plutarch's *Lives* reached Elizabethan England through France. Very early in the history of the French Renaissance was Plutarch admitted to the first rank of the literary hierarchy. A French rendering made his *Lives* a French classic. The French translator, Jacques Amyot, born in 1513, lived on till 1593, when Shakespeare was twenty-nine. For the last twenty-three years of his life he was bishop of Auxerre, and suffered much in old age from the civil strife which waged in his diocese. His version of Plutarch's *Lives* was published at Paris in 1559. It reads like an original work, and reveals

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French prose in all its grace and perspicuity. Amyot's scholarship was not impeccable and mistranslations are not infrequent. Yet Amyot's effort remains one of the most successful renderings of Greek into a modern language. "I do with some reason, as me seemeth," wrote Montaigne, "give pricke and praise unto Iaques Amiot above all our French writers, not only for his natural purity, and pure elegancie of the tongue . . . but above all, I con him thanks that he hath had the hap to chuse, and knowledge to cull-out so worthy a worke [as Plutarch's *Lives*], and a booke so fit to the purpose, therewith to make so unvaluable a present unto his countrie. We that are in the number of the ignorant had beene utterly confounded, had not his booke raised us from out the dust of ignorance. . . . It is our breviarie." Montaigne's enthusiasm for Amyot's labours echoes a sentiment universal among his countrymen and countrywomen. Madame Roland re-embodied it in her famous salutation of Plutarch's work as "le pâtre des grandes âmes."

It is worthy of remembrance that the French essayist's eulogy was rendered into English by John Florio at the time that Shakespeare was engaged on *Julius Caesar*. But two decades earlier the French enthusiasm had infected England. Amyot's version of Plutarch's *Lives* was anglicised by Sir Thomas North as early as 1579, and North's rendering was at once accorded standard rank. The English translator, like Montaigne, contented himself with studying the Greek writer exclusively in his French interpreter, and Amyot's errors are all reproduced by North. But the Elizabethan version,

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*despite the interval that separates it from its original,* conserves in ample measure the point and spirit of the Greek text. North's great folio was reprinted four times during Shakespeare's active career. All these reissues came from the press of his friend of boyhood and his earliest publisher, Richard Field, his fellow-townsmen, who by the end of the sixteenth century had become a leading London "stationer." Varied influences converged to draw Shakespeare into the circle of Plutarch's admirers.

### III

Many dramatists before Shakespeare had perceived the adaptability of Plutarch's *Lives* to the purposes of drama. Especially had the contrivers, as Plutarch described them, of the fall of the Roman Republic and of the rise of the Roman Empire attracted the notices of playwrights in both France and England. Round most of Plutarch's episodes in the career of Julius Caesar, French and English dramas were woven while Shakespeare was a child.

The death of Julius Caesar was the theme of two of the earliest essays in tragedy which belong to the French Renaissance. Marc-Antoine Muret, professor of the college of Guienne at Bordeaux, based on Plutarch's life of Caesar a Latin tragedy, which was acted by his students in 1544. Among this writer's academic colleagues at the time was the Scottish scholar, George Buchanan, and among his pupils who filled parts in the piece was the essayist Montaigne. Muret wholly con-

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fined himself to the assassination of the Dictator. Sixteen years later Jacques Grévin, then a pupil at the college of Beauvais, wrote for presentation by his fellow-collegians a tragedy on the same topic, not in Latin, but in rhyming French verse. Grévin's play, like Muret's, is cast in the Senecan mould, with choruses of Caesar's soldiers, and long narratives in monologue, but he enlarged Muret's scope by borrowing hints from Plutarch's lives of Brutus and Mark Antony in addition to the life of Caesar. Grévin had much dramatic feeling. Calpurnia's fears and her appeal to Caesar to absent himself from the Senate on the fateful Ides of March are clothed by him in vivid language. The emotional and choleric temperament of Cassius is forcibly contrasted with the equable tenor of Brutus's disposition, and Grévin's last act presents with spirit the harangues of Brutus and Antony to the fickle mob. Grévin's tragedy acquired a wide reputation and inaugurated many traditions in the dramatic treatment of Caesar's death, which Shakespeare consciously or unconsciously developed.

Simultaneously, tragic writers of the French Renaissance, whose names enjoyed a more enduring fame than Grévin's, wrought out of Plutarch's *Lives* plays dealing with other incidents in the same period of Roman history. Jodelle produced in 1552 his tragedy of *Cleopatra*, which is often reckoned the parent of modern French tragedy. A little later, while Shakespeare was approaching manhood, an even more famous French dramatist, Robert Garnier, not only essayed anew the stirring topic of Antony and Cleopatra in the piece called *Marc Antoine*, but he adapted to the stage, in a tragedy called

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*Porcie*, Plutarch's moving study of Brutus's brave wife Portia, while in a third tragedy called *Cornélie* (the widow of Pompey) Garnier invested with a genuinely dramatic significance such characters as Julius Caesar, Cicero, Mark Antony, Decimus Brutus, and Cassius. Cassius' speech glows throughout Garnier's drama of *Cornélie* with revolutionary ardour. Garnier's experiments in Roman tragedy are the more noteworthy in that two of them, — *Marc Antoine* and *Cornélie* — were both rendered into English, — the first by Sir Philip Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke (1594), and the second by Thomas Kyd (1595), — well before Shakespeare ventured into the Roman field.

Meanwhile at home in England, for the best part of the half-century which preceded *Julius Caesar*, the English stage had offered a home to Caesar and his friends and foes. The Roman hero has some shadowy claim, indeed, to have dignified the very birth of English tragedy. According to the contemporary diarist, Henry Machyn, a play called "Julius Caesar" was acted at Queen Elizabeth's court in February, 1562, a month after the production there of *Gorboduc*, the primordial English tragedy. But of this incident no full knowledge is accessible.

It would appear that, when Caesar first figured in English tragedy, it was in the capacity not of Dictator, but of rival and ultimate conqueror of Pompey, his early friend and ally. The sour censor of theatres, Stephen Gosson, reports that a play concerning Caesar and Pompey attracted the favour of the playgoer about 1579, in the childhood of the first theatre which was erected in

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London. Fifteen years later, when the theatres of the English capital had been organised on a secure basis, the enterprising manager, Philip Henslowe, produced a second effort on the same theme, with a sequel called simply "Caesar," of which the precise subject is unrecorded. None of these early Elizabethan experiments in Roman tragedy are extant. But the Pompeian fable maintained its hold on the London stage through Shakespeare's career, and has left later memorials in print. A third English play, "Caesar and Pompey," which was produced by students of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1607, survives in a published book, and subsequently George Chapman devoted his tragic genius to a new version of the topic, which may be found among his extant works. Shakespeare's brief references in his tragedy of *Julius Caesar* to Caesar's triumph over Pompey assume, on the part of the audience, some familiarity with Pompey's story. Its frequent adaptation to stage purposes in preceding years explains the easy allusiveness.

Meanwhile workers for the Elizabethan as for the contemporary French stage anticipated Shakespeare in dramatising the final catastrophe of Caesar's great career. There was a lost Latin piece called *Caesar Interfectus* by Richard Edes whom the critic Francis Meres credited with tragic gifts. It was produced by students at Oxford in 1582 during Shakespeare's boyhood. Very early in the seventeenth century, in May, 1602, the manager Henslowe, returning once again to Caesarian topics, commissioned four Elizabethans of fertile dramatic genius, Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, John Webster, and Thomas Middleton, to write a tragedy to



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be called *Caesar's Fall*. Fate has withheld from us the text of these two experiments in Roman drama. But possibly Shakespeare had the earlier of them in mind when he made Polonius in *Hamlet* recall his rendering "at the University," of the part of Julius Caesar and his mimic murder by Brutus in the Capitol.

The dramatic stream of Caesarism was not easily checked. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, despite its artistic superiority to anything that went before or after it, is by no means the final word of the Elizabethan or Jacobean drama on the tragic theme. William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, a poetic dramatist who shared Shakespeare's predilection for Plutarchan topics, produced in 1604, quite independently of Shakespeare, a stiff Senecan play of "Julius Caesar" in English rhyme, which covered once more the ancient story of the conspiracy and its immediate issue in the flight of the conspirators. There is evidence too that the assassination was through the early years of the seventeenth century a favourite topic for travelling puppet-shows, competing for the applause of the humblest pleasure-seeker with the *Fall of Nineveh* and the *Destruction of Jerusalem*. Of this wide dissemination through the dramatic hierarchy of Caesar's tragic story Shakespeare gives a plain reminiscence in the speeches of Brutus and Cassius over his bleeding corpse (III, i, 111-114):

"CASSIUS.

How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty scene be acted o'er

In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

BRUTUS. How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport!"

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### IV

Too much of the work of Shakespeare's predecessors in Roman tragedy is lost to make it possible to define with absolute certainty its relation to his own. But while it is clear that Shakespeare was acquainted with the luxuriant Caesarian drama of older date, we may well doubt whether he owed to it aught beyond the impulse to handle the topic, a primary conception of its dramatic capacities, and a determination to challenge the rewards of its theatrical popularity. It is supererogatory to look elsewhere than in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* for the clues which Shakespeare followed. Only in the merest trifles is there sign that he studied other sources.

From one of the lost Caesarian plays, Shakespeare may possibly have borrowed the hero's dying cry, "Et tu, Brute," which has no kind of classical authority.<sup>1</sup> But the phrase appears as a colloquial tag in an extant English historical play (*The True Tragedie of the Duke of Yorke*, 1595), of earlier year than Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and it may have caught the dramatist's eye there. Plutarch failed to suggest that moving touch.

The Greek biographer too is not responsible for Shakespeare's oft-repeated error of placing the scene of Caesar's assassination in the Capitol. According to Plutarch and all classical historians, that episode passed in a hall which adjoined Pompey's theatre and was

<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, III, i, 77, and note.

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overlooked by a statue of Pompey. Polonius in *Hamlet* likewise assigns the scene of Caesar's death to the Capitol. Shakespeare may have derived the error from some preceding drama on the topic, but the misconception was a tradition in England since the time of Chaucer, who wrote in *The Monkes Tale* (713-716):

“This Julius to the *Capitolie* wente,  
Upon a day as he was wont to go on,  
And in the *Capitolie* anon him hente  
This false Brutus and his othere foon.”

Plutarch knows nothing of the Capitol in this connexion. But here Shakespeare paid tribute to a conventional error with eyes half-opened to the truth. While he misdescribes the Capitol as the meeting-place of the Senate on the fatal day, he rightly follows Plutarch in depicting Caesar's dead body as lying in the same scene at the base of Pompey's statue. That statue stood outside the region of the Capitol. The old mistake is thus given in a new and original perplexity.

All other errors in the piece are attributable to Shakespeare's study of North, — to an overscrupulous respect for North's words, even where they happen either to misread Amyot's French, or to repeat Amyot's misapprehension of the Greek. Shakespeare is perpetuating slips of North when he gives *Decimus* Brutus, Caesar's favourite and a distant cousin of the conspirator Marcus, the unauthorized prænomen of *Decius*. North, too, is responsible for Mark Antony's allocation, in the play, of the gardens which Caesar bequeathed to the people of Rome to *this* side of the Tiber, to the same

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side as the Forum, where the crowded streets left no room for gardens. Plutarch had correctly placed the gardens across the river, on the opposite side to that where the Forum lay. Only one divergence from the facts of history needs any other explanation. Shakespeare, in making the triumvirs meet after Caesar's murder in Rome, instead of on an island on the river Reno near Bologna, as in Plutarch, made the alteration deliberately for the dramatic purpose of simplifying the scenic disposition of events. But such a conscious emendation of his authority stands almost alone.

It is Shakespeare's strict fidelity to Plutarch which largely distinguishes his mode of work in *Julius Caesar* from what preceded it. He takes none of those liberties with his authorities which were habitual to him when dramatising an Italian novel or even an English chronicle. He creates no new characters. He does not divert the course of events. Though his dependent method bears some resemblance to his procedure in the English-history plays, he adheres far more closely to Plutarch's text than to the text of Holinshed. He appropriates more of Plutarch's phraseology as presented by North; his verbal modifications are on the whole slighter. He economises his powers with a greater frugality. Yet his dramatic instinct never sleeps. He chooses and rejects (he does not invent) incident as suits his dramatic purpose; invariably he imports into his borrowings the unerring dramatic touch, and with a magical facility he clothes the borrowed utterance or trait of character with dramatic significance. Although he knew nothing, save what he learnt from Plutarch's pages, of such

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distinctively Roman ceremonies, as the feast of the Lupercalia or of Roman funeral rites, they are reproduced in his tragedy with the fidelity of life.

One cannot measure more graphically the affluence and vivifying power of Shakespeare's dramatic power than by placing side by side a few specimens of North's phraseology with Shakespeare's adaptation of them. Plutarch's pellucid and swiftly flowing language grows pale and heavy when it is contrasted with Shakespeare's conversion of it into the vivid terms of drama.

Take for example the account of the portents preceding Caesar's murder. Shakespeare transfers Plutarch's catalogue almost literally to Casca's mouth. Plutarch's words begin thus:

"Furthermore there was a slave of the soldiers that did cast a marvellous burning flame out of his hand, insomuch that they who saw it thought he had been burnt; but when the fire was out, it was found he had no hurt."

Shakespeare's transliteration opens thus:

"A common slave (you know him well by sight),  
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn  
Like twenty torches join'd; and yet his hand,  
Not sensible of fire, remain'd unscorch'd."

The initial dramatic touch "you know him well by sight" at once infects the narrative with the dramatic vivacity of which Plutarch gives no trace.

Again, Shakespeare appropriates from Plutarch's pages the whole story of the omen which shakes the nerve of Cassius "being in opinion an Epicurean" on

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the eve of the battle of Philippi (V, i, 80–90). Cassius speaks to this effect:

“You know, that I held Epicurus strong,  
And his opinion: now I change my mind  
And partly credit things that do presage.  
Coming from Sardis, on our former ensign  
Two mighty eagles fell, and there they perched,  
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers’ hands  
Who to Philippi here consorted us.  
This morning are they fled away, and gone,  
And in their steads, do ravens crows and kites  
Fly o’er our heads, and downward look on us  
As we were sickly prey; their shadows seem  
A canopy most fatal, under which  
Our Army lies, ready to give up the ghost.”

Plutarch had put the situation thus (Vol. VI, 218–219):

“When they raised their Camp, there came two Eagles that flying with a marvellous force, lighted upon two of the foremost Ensigns, and always followed the soldiers, which gave them meat and fed them, untill they came near to the city of Philippi; and there one day only before the battle, they both flew away. . . . and yet further there was seen a marvellous number of fowls of prey, that feed upon dead carcasses: . . . The which began somewhat to alter Cassius’ mind from Epicurus’ opinions.”

No point is lacking from Plutarch’s narrative, yet it sounds coldly before Shakespeare’s magic breath has lent it warmth.

Elsewhere Shakespeare’s modification of Plutarch’s words are more energetic, but there is no violent deviation from their tenor. Plutarch’s prosaic hint of Portia’s

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nervous agitation after Brutus has left her for the Senate House is interpreted by Shakespeare with a peculiarly dramatic vigour. Plutarch writes:

“Portia being very careful (*i. e.* anxious) and pensive for that which was to come, and being too weak to away with so great and inward grief of mind, she could hardly keep within, but was frightened with every little noise and cry she heard, as those that are taken and possessed with the fury of the Bacchantes; asking every man that came from the market place what Brutus did, and still sent messenger after messenger to know what news.”

This passage reappears in Shakespeare's play (Act II, Sc. iv) thus:

“PORTIA. I prithee, boy, run to the senate-house;  
Stay not to answer me, but get thee gone;  
Why dost thou stay?

LUC. To know thy errand, madam.

PORT. I would have had thee there, and here again,  
Ere I can tell thee what thou should'st do there. —

. . . . .  
Art thou here yet?

LUC. Madam, what should I do?

Run to the Capitol, and nothing else?

And so return to you, and nothing else?

PORT. Yes, bring me word, boy, if thy lord look well,  
For he went sickly forth: and take good note  
What Caesar doth, what suitors press to him.  
Hark, boy! what noise is that?

LUC. I hear none, madam.

PORT. Prithee, listen well.

I hear a bustling rumour, like a fray,

And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

LUC. Sooth, madam, I hear nothing.”

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Perhaps the vivifying force of dramatic genius is seen to highest advantage in Shakespeare's treatment of Plutarch's suggestions for two of the most striking incidents in the story, — the great speech of Mark Antony at Caesar's funeral, and the quarrel scene between Brutus and Cassius. Plutarch had from his own point of view dealt adequately with both, but it remained for Shakespeare to impregnate them with dramatic feeling. The speech he sets on Antony's lips is universally regarded as the finest extant display of the orator's art. Plutarch recognised that the situation required a mighty effort on Antony's part and he reported that it was successfully made, but his faculty was unequal to the task of inventing Antony's precise language. He confined himself to describing Antony's speech thus :

“And therefore when Caesar's body was brought to the place where it should be buried, he made a funeral oration in commendation of Caesar, according to the ancient custom of praising noble men at their funerals. When he saw that the people were very glad and desirous also to hear Caesar spoken of, and his praises uttered, he mingled his oration with lamentable words; and by amplifying of matters did greatly move their hearts and affections unto pity and compassion. In fine, to conclude his oration, he unfolded before the whole assembly the bloody garments of the dead, thrust through in many places with their swords, and called the malefactors cruel and cursed murtherers. With these words he put the people into such a fury, that they presently took Caesar's body, and burnt it in the market place, with such tables and forms as they could get together.”

It is unnecessary to quote Shakespeare's amplification of this passage. Nor is it needful to cite the proofs



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of Shakespeare's indebtedness to Plutarch for practically every bare detail of Brutus's or Cassius' mutual recriminations. Yet as soon as Plutarch's description of the angry encounter is compared with Shakespeare's moving scene, Shakespeare's mastery of the whole gamut of dramatic expression which lies between passionate vituperation and brotherly tenderness, stands forth in an unassailable originality. Plutarch offers Shakespeare bronze for him to transmute into gold.

### V

In constructing the plot of *Julius Caesar* Shakespeare was not content to draw his incident from a single life of Plutarch. He closely studied three of Plutarch's lives, those of Brutus and Mark Antony in addition to that of Caesar. In part the three memoirs cover the same ground, though Antony's memoir quickly passes beyond the chronological limits of the others. Shakespeare collated all three biographies, though for the present he concentrated chief attention on the records of Caesar and Brutus. His outlook was thereby widened. The foundations on which the dramatic edifice rests are ampler than those of any earlier play on Caesar's death, save that of Grévin. The extension of plan made more exacting demands on the writer's stagecraft.

Though Shakespeare conformed to the well-established dramatic tradition in giving Caesar's death a foremost place in the tragedy, he was ill content with the limits which previous playwrights had allotted that theme. Before Shakespeare wrote his play no one who

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had dramatised the great historic episode of Caesar's assassination had carried the course of events beyond Antony's funeral oration, and the reactionary outcry of the Roman populace against the conspirators. Caesar, in the old dramatic versions, is the undisputed hero from beginning to end. Shakespeare respects Caesar's supremacy, but he invests it with the colour of paradox. The conventional dramatic action is liberally expanded. At the close of the third of his five acts, the plot has progressed no further than the popular uprising against Brutus and his colleagues, with which earlier dramatists terminated their plays. Shakespeare's fourth and fifth acts deal, by way of sequel, with episodes in Roman history subsequent to Caesar's funeral, and covering fully two and a half later years. In the closing acts Shakespeare presents in historic sequence events with which Caesar's biography has no obvious concern. We are witnesses of Antony's formation of the triumvirate, of the eastward flight of Brutus and Cassius, of their assumption of arms in Macedonia, of their pursuit by the forces of Octavianus and Antony, of the battle at Philippi, and of the suicide of the two leaders of the great conspiracy. It is not the death of Caesar on March 15, 44 B. C., which crowns Shakespeare's tragedy, but the death of Brutus in October, 42 B. C. Chronology indeed gives the second of these two tragic events an ampler setting than the first. A period of little more than a single month passes in the play before the first catastrophe is reached; a long interval of two years and seven months passes before the second catastrophe brings the piece to its end.

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Thus the single interest, the unity, of the old dramatic story is seriously menaced by Shakespeare. The narrow bounds of the old action are copiously transgressed. Through more than half of Shakespeare's tragedy Caesar's ashes rest in their funeral urn. After Caesar's death Brutus, who has already challenged the prominence of the Dictator, becomes the unquestioned protagonist. Or, if Brutus's place of predominance is threatened at all, it is not by the eponymous hero of the piece, but by his fellow-conspirator, Cassius. Contrary to all established dramatic conventions, the episode of Caesar's assassination is brought into dramatic rivalry with the suicides of Brutus and Cassius.

It is the glory of Shakespeare's artistic genius thus to complicate and lengthen the threads of action without disturbing the dramatic equipoise. Inconsistencies are not altogether eliminated. But their effect is neutralised by the uniformly animated energy which fuses the links connecting the rival episodes. There is no smouldering of the dramatic fire. The vivid portrayal of Caesar's funeral is quickly followed by the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius, of which Coleridge wrote that no other part of Shakespeare equally impressed him with "the belief of his genius being superhuman." Hardly anywhere else is Shakespeare's easy mastery of the art of dramatic construction seen to better advantage.

In placing so stupendous an incident as the assassination of Caesar in the middle distance, Shakespeare was challenging the perils of an anticlimax. Very subtle is the two-fold contrivance whereby he circumvented his danger. In the first place he gave a new and unprece-

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dent reading of Caesar's character. He divests him of most of his heroic attributes. He does not rob him of dignity altogether, but he presents him as living somewhat precariously on a past reputation. His great personality is seen sinking into littleness under the humiliation of physical weaknesses. His decisive and resolute temper is no longer impervious to flattery and womanish vacillation. His faith in his star is decaying. His tone of authority has not vanished, but it has acquired a strain of bombast and extravagance which suggests hollowness and unreality. He is, as Cassius described him, "the tired Caesar." Though the world is still bending in awe beneath his gaze, his eye is losing its lustre, and his tongue has a trembling accent.

Plutarch notices Caesar's bodily infirmities. "Concerning the constitution of his body," the Greek biographer writes, "he was lean, white, and soft-skinned, and often subject to headache and other while to the falling sickness [*i. e.*, epilepsy]." But Plutarch merely treats such symptoms as additional proofs of his eminence, of his invincible capacity to face "all labour and hardness more than his body could bear." He burned even in his last days, according to Plutarch, "with a greedy desire of honour that set him afire and pricked him forward." Shakespeare, on the other hand, eagerly emphasises every indication of the Dictator's physical debility, veiling behind it the heroic aspect of his character. The dramatist in part forges evidence of physical weakness of which Plutarch offers no suggestion. Shakespeare, for example, invents the touch that Caesar was deaf in the left ear. Shakespeare neglects too all

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the many notes that Plutarch sounds of Caesar's heroic indifference to personal comfort and impatience of effeminate luxury. No one who studied Caesar's character exclusively in Shakespeare's portrait could recognise his title to the conventional verdict of pre-eminent heroism, which a contemporary of Shakespeare phrased thus: "For his excellences, graces, and abilities, his invincible mind, his incomparable force and courage, the battles and victories which he obtained, the provinces, kings, and nations which he overcame or subdued, his counsels, stratagems, policies, and bold attempts, his magnanimity, clemency, and bounty to the conquered and conquerors, the great designs he had propounded when he was slain, being all weighed well and considered, it will plainly appear that in none of the things aforesaid, neither in many other more which may be said of him, there hath been any king or captain that excelled him, but that he in the most had excelled all others and had fewer imperfections and vices than any other." <sup>1</sup>

There are signs that Shakespeare's depreciatory estimate of Caesar had dawned on his mind before he took this play in hand. In *As You Like It*, V, ii, Caesar's characteristic phrase "I came, I saw, I overcame" is described as "a thrasonical brag," while Falstaff in *2 Hen. IV*, IV, iii, 40, when quoting the same words, disrespectfully assigns them to "the hook-nosed fellow of Rome." Thus, according to Shakespeare's unconventional interpretation of Caesar's personality, mental and

<sup>1</sup> Mexia's *Imperial History* (translated 1623).

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physical failure had brought him very low before he was prostrated by the conspirators' blows. One dramatic consequence of such depreciation is clear. The shock attending the fall of a crippled veteran is slight compared with that which attaches to the overthrow of a mighty ruler in the plenitude of his prowess and confidence. The pity and terror of his tragic fate are attenuated, and a sequel to his tragedy is endurable.

A hint in Plutarch caught Shakespeare's seeing eye and offered him an effective cue. The last paragraph in Plutarch's life of Caesar opens with these words: "But his [Caesar's] great prosperity and good fortune that favoured him all his lifetime, did continue afterwards in the revenge of his death, pursuing the murderers both by sea and land, till they had not left a man more to be executed, of all them that were actors or counsellors in the conspiracy of his death." Far earlier in the dramatist's career had he written of Julius Caesar (*Richard III*, III, i, 87):

"Death makes no conquest of this conqueror."

The same point of view he restated towards the end of his active life, when he wrote of Caesar in *Cymbeline* (III, i, 2-4):

" . . . whose remembrance yet  
Lives in men's eyes and will to ears and tongues  
Be theme and hearing ever."

Shakespeare's reading of history inclined him to exalt Caesar's spiritual influence after his death above his strength in life. That was the theme which he subtly contrived to make in *Julius Caesar* the motive force of

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the scenes which succeed the assassination, and a new rallying point for the reader's or spectator's emotions. The Dictator's friend, Antony, at sight of the murdered corpse first strikes the needful note. He prophesies that Caesar's spirit ranging for revenge

“With Ate by his side, come hot from hell  
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice  
Cry ‘Havoc!’ and let slip the dogs of war.”

To Brutus himself in the same scene the identical sentiment presents itself, and he apostrophises the lifeless body with the words “Thou are mighty yet; thy spirit walks abroad.” Finally when the armies of Rome are about to deal vengeance on Caesar's murderers, the ghost of Caesar visits Brutus's tent and gives oracular warning of the fate that awaits the arch conspirator at Philippi. Plutarch merely described the apparition in Brutus's tent on the eve of the fatal battle as Brutus's “evil spirit.” Its title in the play — “The Ghost of Caesar” — is Shakespeare's invention, thereby completing the revelation of his dramatic purpose.

Thus Shakespeare deliberately amplifies Plutarch's slender suggestion of Caesar's posthumous power and invests it with a new and dramatic vigour. The fable of the drama is knit into essential unity by the double process of belittling the hero's stature in his last days of life and of magnifying the spiritual influence of his fame after death. The device savours of irony. But it justifies the treatment of Caesar's death as a temporary stopping-place in the development of the tragedy. In the result the play never lacks homogeneity nor justness of perspective.

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### VI

Apart from Caesar, whose presentation is deliberately streaked with paradox, the characters of the piece are so clearly defined and for the most part so consistently developed that the reader stands in small need of guidance in a study of them. On Brutus, Shakespeare has lavished all his sympathetic insight. He paints in glowing colour the perils besetting a high-souled and sensitive nature who is drawn *malgré lui* into the turmoils of a political revolution. Brutus's family traditions, which compel in him devotion to the cause of political liberty, play havoc with his life. Personally he is imbued with the love of philosophic contemplation. He delights in literature and music. A book is rarely out of his hand. He has a magnanimous faith in the virtues of mankind and recoils from evidence of their depravity. He is no man's enemy. He has a genius for friendship, and his friends include men of all classes and of all opinions. As a consequence he enjoys general respect, even veneration, and partisanship casts no slur on his good name. Therein lurks disaster.

The seeds of tragedy are sown as soon as Brutus's brother-in-law and friend, the cross-grained republican, Cassius, works on his inherited instincts of liberalism. Brutus is an old friend of Julius Caesar's. But Cassius is able to prove to Brutus's satisfaction that as long as Caesar continues in power popular rights to which Brutus's personal faith and the honour of his family are



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intimately bound are in peril. Cassius has realised that any cause with which Brutus energetically identifies himself is certain of wide and enthusiastic support. Reluctantly Brutus assents to become chieftain of Caesar's political foes in obedience to what sounds like an imperative call of justice and honour. But he is too richly endowed with the milk of human kindness to fit him for leadership of a party in a stormy crisis. He cannot bring himself to countenance the desperate deeds which are requisite to the success of a revolution. With misgiving he assents to the assassination of Caesar, for his person is the embodiment of that evil principle in government which is repugnant to his inherited instinct. But he will go no further in the career of slaughter. He spares Antony, whose character he misinterprets, and he makes Antony a gift of the opportunity of rallying the Roman populace to the cause of the murdered tyrant. Meanwhile, among his followers he will tolerate no tendency to corruption or excess, and when Antony's army is at his heels, he champions the cause of purity at the risk of alienating his chief supporter. Inexperienced in the arts of war, he is hampered in his movements by the doubts and scruples of conscience which always prejudice strategy on the battlefield. He dies by his own hand, unequal to the strain of the practical endeavour to make his principles prevail against the rude odds of life.

Brutus's fellow-conspirators are cast in a rougher mould, and are on a different intellectual and spiritual plane. They present various types of the politician actively engaged in party warfare. Cassius, despite his affectionate admiration of his leader, is a stranger to his

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scruples. He is above all a man of action, and though moved by an honest abhorrence of political tyranny, he lacks any punctilious sense of honour. He cherishes personal grievances against Caesar, and thinks to derive personal advantage from his fall. But he has no want of physical courage, and has the moments of tenderness incident to the courageous temperament. He frankly recognises defeat when all avenues of escape are finally closed, and his self-inflicted death does him no discredit.

Casca offers another kind of foil to Brutus. He is the only prominent character of the play whom Shakespeare has endowed with a sense of humour. At heart he is an aristocrat, with a breezy contempt for the mob. His devotion to liberal principles has no democratic colour; it is the outcome of a congenital suspicion of the fitness of any one human being to control the destinies of his fellow-men.

Of the other male characters in the play, Cicero is allotted too small a part to give him much distinction. He is ridiculed by Casca for speaking Greek, when his native language would have answered all purposes, — a shrewd hit at the great orator's love of pose. Shakespeare proves, too, that he formed instinctively a just conception of his temperament when he makes Brutus object to his enrolment among the conspirators on the ground that

“he would never follow anything  
That other men begin.”

Mark Antony is drawn in a larger scale, but without much subtlety and with some lack of consistency. A pleasure seeker and addicted to sport, he lacks moral

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robustness. But there is latent in him immense energy, which is hardly distinguishable from genius, and the stirring crisis of his uncle's death calls out unsuspected power. The shock rouses him to a rare display of eloquence, and he develops instantaneously an astute capacity for affairs. He justifies his impatience of inefficiency in his weak ally Lepidus by the decisiveness of his own conduct. In spite of his selfish indulgences he shows throughout the play a strong personal affection for his benefactor Caesar, while a certain measure of magnanimity must be set to his credit in view of the eulogy he pronounces at the close of the tragedy over the dead body of Brutus.

As becomes the stern political atmosphere, the feminine interest of the tragedy is subordinated to the main action, but there is enough of it to broaden the human significance of the picture. The women characters are only two in number, Calpurnia, the wife of Caesar, and Portia, the wife of Brutus. Both are lifelike studies which set in high relief pertinent aspects of their husbands' characters. The two wives are childless, and wholly identify themselves with their husbands, by whose affairs their horizons are bounded. Calpurnia is that common type of domesticated wife who regards public questions solely as they make for the security and happiness of the home. She has superstitious fears for her husband's safety at the fateful meeting of the Senate on the Ides of March, and claims the right to detain him at home. It is immaterial to her that his public obligations and the call of public duty conflict with her bidding and wishes. Business of state lies beyond her sphere. She is of the type of

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woman who, in Iago's cynical phrase, is born "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer." Her sole aim in life is to minister to Caesar's domestic comfort, and Caesar's uxorious submissiveness helps to suggest his threatening dotage.

Portia is endowed with a far richer and more expansive temperament. She is the daughter of the stoic philosopher Cato of Utica; she is "Cato's daughter, Brutus's Portia," after whom Shakespeare had long before christened admiringly Bassanio's spirited bride in *The Merchant of Venice*. Brutus's wife claims to be "stronger than her sex," "being so father'd and so husbanded." But her lofty self-opinion has not generated in her any ambition of controlling her husband. Her gentle disposition merely impels her to claim the right of sharing his innermost confidence, which his tendency to self-absorption and chivalric dread of causing her anxiety make it impossible for him to offer her. She cannot endure the thought that he has secrets from her. With characteristic sincerity she proves her powers of endurance and her fitness to bear Brutus's anxieties by wounding herself with a sword. It is abhorrent to her to be treated as a plaything, as a mere minister to conjugal pleasures. The thought of exclusion from Brutus's affairs humiliates her, not from any exaggerated faith in her sagacity, but from her conception of wifely duty, which denies the husband's right to isolate himself from her in any sphere of his life. The sense of neglect tortures her more than physical violence. When she learns of the failure of her husband's plans, knowledge of which he had deliberately withheld from her, she realizes that

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life, whether with him or without him, is intolerable. Following the example which her father had set her, she puts an end to her existence by the terrible expedient of placing live coals in her mouth.

### VII

*Julius Caesar* enjoyed for fully two centuries a prosperous career in the theatre. The great Forum scene and the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius were recognised at once to be among the most stirring theatrical episodes in the whole range of Elizabethan drama. One of Shakespeare's earliest eulogists, Leonard Digges, twice described in verse the applause which attended in the playhouse the rousing "parley" of the two conspirators. Digges' first poem was prefixed to the First Folio of 1623. In his second poetic commendation, which appeared in the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*, Digges contrasted the coldness which numbed the audience when Ben Jonson's Roman play of *Catiline* was revived, with the frenzied acclamations which welcomed the return to the stage of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. All classes of auditor acknowledged the appeal of the tragedy in its early days of life. It is doubtless the piece called *Caesars Tragedye* which was acted at court in May, 1613, during the marriage festivities attending the union of the Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine.

At the Restoration *Julius Caesar* remained a stock piece in the repertory of the leading London company of

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actors, which was then called the King's Company, and was under Thomas Killigrew's direction. Through the eighteenth century too the vogue of the piece was well maintained. In more recent years the piece has lost in England much of its theatrical popularity. The battle scenes and the dialogues between Brutus and Cassius at the close seem difficult to adapt to modern scenic conditions, and only a few of the greatest actors of the nineteenth century have been moved to devote their full energy to an interpretation of rôles so fascinating as Brutus and Mark Antony. The most eminent of the Kemples and Macready added to their reputations in the part of Brutus. Recent revivals of the piece in England have been few, and in theatrical circles it has lost much of its ancient favour. But its fascination for the student has never diminished, and in his sight the tragedy must always rank with the most stimulating efforts of Shakespeare's pen.

SIDNEY LEE.



# **JULIUS CÆSAR**



# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ <sup>1</sup>

JULIUS CÆSAR.

OCTAVIUS CÆSAR, MARCUS ANTONIUS, M. ÆMIL. LEPIDUS,	}	triumvirs after the death of Julius Cæsar.
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CICERO, PUBLIUS, POPILIUS LENA,	}	senators.
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MARCUS BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, LIGARIUS, DECIUS BRUTUS, METELLUS CIMBER, CINNA,	}	conspirators against Julius Cæsar.
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FLAVIUS and MARULLUS, tribunes.

ARTEMIDORUS of Cnidos, a teacher of Rhetoric.

A Soothsayer.

CINNA, a poet.      Another Poet.

LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, MESSALA, Young CATO, VOLUMNIUS,	}	friends to Brutus and Cassius.
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VARRO, CLITUS, CLAUDIUS, STRATO, LUCIUS, DARDANIUS,	}	servants to Brutus.
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PINDARUS, servant to Cassius.

CALPURNIA, wife to Cæsar.

PORTIA, wife to Brutus.

Senators, Citizens, Guards, Attendants, &c.

SCENE: *Rome ; the neighbourhood of Sardis ; the neighbourhood  
of Philippi*

<sup>1</sup> This was printed for the first time, with exceptional accuracy, in the First Folio of 1623. The piece is there divided into Acts, but although at the head of the play appear the words *Actus Primus*, *Scæna Prima*, there are no scenic subdivisions. These were first supplied by Rowe in 1709, who also provided for the first time a list of the "dramatis personæ," with an indication of the "Scene."

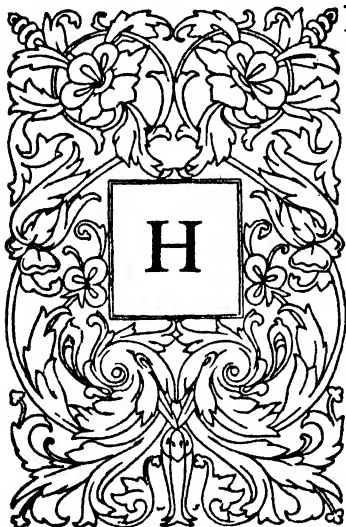


## ACT FIRST — SCENE I — ROME

### A STREET

*Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, and certain Commoners*

FLAVIUS



ENCE! HOME, YOU IDLE

creatures, get you home:

Is this a holiday? what! know  
you not,

Being mechanical, you ought  
not walk

Upon a labouring day without  
the sign

Of your profession? Speak,  
what trade art thou?

FIRST COM. Why, sir, a car-  
penter.

MAR. Where is thy leather  
apron and thy rule?

What dost thou with thy best apparel on?

You, sir, what trade are you?

3 *mechanical*] of the class of mechanic or artisan. Cf. 2 *Hen. VI*, I, iii, 191: "Base dunghill villain and *mechanical*."

SEC. COM. Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would say, a cobbler. 11

MAR. But what trade art thou? answer me directly.

SEC. COM. A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safeconscience; which is indeed, sir, a mender of badsoles.

MAR. What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?

SEC. COM. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

MAR. What mean'st thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

SEC. COM. Why, sir, cobble you. 20

FLAV. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

SEC. COM. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl. I am indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I re-cover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neats-leather have gone upon my handiwork.

FLAV. But wherefore art not in thy shop to-day? Why dost thou lead these men about the streets? 29

SEC. COM. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get

10 *in respect . . . workman*] as compared with an efficient, expert workman.

11 *a cobbler*] The word is used quibblingly in the sense of "botcher," clumsy worker, and Marullus does not perceive at once that a shoemaker is meant.

14 *soles*] a favourite pun on "souls." Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, IV, i, 123: "Not on thy *sole*, but on thy *soul*, harsh Jew."

16 *be not out*] do not lose your temper.

17 *out*] out at toes or heels, with broken shoe leather.

26 *neats-leather*] cow-hide or calf-skin.

myself into more work. But indeed, sir, we make holiday, to see Cæsar and to rejoice in his triumph.

MAR. Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?

What tributaries follow him to Rome,  
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?  
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!  
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,  
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft  
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,  
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops, 40  
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat  
The live-long day with patient expectation  
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:  
And when you saw his chariot but appear,  
Have you not made an universal shout,  
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks  
To hear the replication of your sounds  
Made in her concave shores?  
And do you now put on your best attire?  
And do you now cull out a holiday? 50  
And do you now strew flowers in his way  
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?  
Be gone!

46 *her*] its. With classical authors rivers were usually masculine.

47 *replication*] reverberation.

52 *Pompey's blood*] Pompey's kindred. Cæsar was celebrating his victory over Pompey's sons and their faction at the battle of Munda in Spain on March 17, B. C. 45. Pompey's eldest son, Cnæus, was slain there. For "blood" cf. *Rich. II*, I, iii, 57 (the king to Hereford), "Farewell, my blood."

Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,  
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague  
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

FLAV. Go, go, good countrymen, and, for this fault,  
Assemble all the poor men of your sort;  
Draw them to Tiber banks and weep your tears  
Into the channel, till the lowest stream 60  
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

[*Exeunt all the Commoners.*]

See, whether their basest metal be not moved;  
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.  
Go you down that way towards the Capitol;  
This way will I: disrobe the images,  
If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.

MAR. May we do so?  
You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

FLAV. It is no matter; let no images  
Be hung with Cæsar's trophies. I'll about, 70

60-61 *till . . . shores of all*] till the water in the river rise from extreme low-water mark to extreme high-water mark.

62 *whether*] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *where*, which was the ordinary pronunciation of "whether."

66 *ceremonies*] festival ornaments, which at line 70, *infra*, are described as "trophies," and at I, ii, 284 more specifically as "scarfs." Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, V, i, 206: "the thing held as a *ceremony*" (*i. e.*, ornament).

68 *the feast of Lupercal*] the Lupercalia, a very ancient festival of purification annually celebrated at Rome in February. It was part of the ritual for the priests of the old Italian shepherd-god Lupercus, who were drawn from the great Roman families or "*gentes*," to run through the city scantily clad in goatskin, and strike with leather thongs women who stood in the runners' way in the belief that their blows would cure sterility. Cf. I, ii, 8, *infra*: "this holy *chase*."

And drive away the vulgar from the streets :  
 So do you too, where you perceive them thick.  
 These growing feathers pluck'd from Cæsar's wing  
 Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,  
 Who else would soar above the view of men  
 And keep us all in servile fearfulness. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE II — A PUBLIC PLACE

*Flourish. Enter CÆSAR; ANTONY, for the course; CALPURNIA, PORTIA, DECIUS, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA; a great crowd following, among them a Soothsayer*

CÆS. Calpurnia !

CASCA. Peace, ho ! Cæsar speaks.

[Music ceases.  
Calpurnia !

CÆS.

CAL. Here, my lord.

CÆS. Stand you directly in Antonius' way,  
 When he doth run his course. Antonius !

ANT. Cæsar, my lord ?

CÆS. Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,  
 To touch Calpurnia ; for our elders say,

74 *pitch*] a common term in falconry, for the highest stage of the falcon's flight. Cf. 1 Hen. VI, II, iv, 11: "Between two hawks, which flies the higher *pitch*?"

1 (stage direction) *for the course*] as a priest of Lupercus, equipped for running at the feast of the Lupercalia. Cf. I, i, 68, *supra*.

(stage direction) DECIUS] This person is so called in error by North (following the French version) in his translation of Plutarch; he was really named Decimus. His surname of Brutus indicates a distant relationship with Marcus Brutus. Cf. I, iii, 148, and II, i, 95, *infra*.

3 *Antonius*] The Folios only recognise the two forms of the name, *Antony* and *Antonio*. For the latter Pope substituted *Antonius* throughout.

The barren, touched in this holy chase,  
*Shake off their sterile curse.*

ANT. I shall remember:

When Cæsar says "do this," it is perform'd. 10

CÆS. Set on, and leave no ceremony out. [*Flourish.*

SOOTH. Cæsar!

CÆS. Ha! who calls?

CASCA. Bid every noise be still: peace yet again!

CÆS. Who is it in the press that calls on me?

I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,  
Cry "Cæsar." Speak; Cæsar is turn'd to hear.

SOOTH. Beware the ides of March.

CÆS. What man is that?

BRU. A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

CÆS. Set him before me; let me see his face. 20

CAS. Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Cæsar.

CÆS. What say'st thou to me now? speak once again.

SOOTH. Beware the ides of March.

CÆS. He is a dreamer; let us leave him: pass.

[*Sennet. Exeunt all but Brutus and Cassius.*

CAS. Will you go see the order of the course?

BRU. Not I.

---

8 *this holy chase*] See note on I, i, 68, *supra*.

11 *Set on*] Proceed.

15 *press*] crowd.

18 *the ides of March*] In the Roman calendar the midmost period of the month was termed the Ides, which fell in March, May, July, October on the 15th day, and in other months on the 13th day.

24 *a dreamer*] a visionary.

(stage direction) [*Sennet*] Notes on a trumpet or cornet, which sounded the entry or exit of a procession.

CAS. I pray you, do.

BRU. I am not gamesome: I do lack some part  
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.  
Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;  
I'll leave you.

30

CAS. Brutus, I do observe you now of late:  
I have not from your eyes that gentleness  
And show of love as I was wont to have:  
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand  
Over your friend that loves you.

BRU. Cassius,  
Be not deceived: if I have veil'd my look,  
I turn the trouble of my countenance  
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am  
Of late with passions of some difference,  
Conceptions only proper to myself,  
Which give some soil perhaps to my behaviours;  
But let not therefore my good friends be grieved —  
Among which number, Cassius, be you one —  
Nor construe any further my neglect  
Than that poor Brutus with himself at war  
Forgets the shows of love to other men.

40

28 *gamesome*] sportive.

29 *quick spirit*] high spirit, liveliness.

35-36 *You bear . . . a hand Over*] You show too harsh and unfriendly a demeanour towards. The metaphor is from a horseman's domineering treatment of his steed. Cf. line 312, *infra*.

39 *Merely*] Entirely.

40 *passions of some difference*] conflicting passions or emotions, *i. e.*, his personal regard for Cæsar and his hatred of Cæsar's political ambition.

42 *Which . . . behaviours*] Which somewhat blemish or spoil my manners.



CAS. Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion;

By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried  
Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations. 50  
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

BRU. No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself  
But by reflection, by some other things.

CAS. 'T is just:

And it is very much lamented, Brutus,  
That you have no such mirrors as will turn  
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,  
That you might see your shadow. I have heard  
Where many of the best respect in Rome,  
Except immortal Cæsar, speaking of Brutus, 60  
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,  
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.

BRU. Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,  
That you would have me seek into myself  
For that which is not in me?

CAS. Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear:  
And since you know you cannot see yourself  
So well as by reflection, I your glass  
Will modestly discover to yourself  
That of yourself which you yet know not of. 70

---

48 *passion*] sentiment.

49 *By means whereof*] In consequence of which misapprehension. The antecedent of *whereof* is the whole sentence *Then Brutus . . . passion* of the preceding line.

53 *But by reflection . . . things*] Only by being reflected in something else, i. e., in the image reflected by mirrors or any polished surface.

58 *shadow*] image.

And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus :  
Were I a common laugh<sup>er</sup>, or did use  
To stale with ordinary oaths my love  
To every new protester ; if you know  
That I do fawn on men and hug them hard,  
And after scandal them ; or if you know  
That I profess myself in banqueting  
To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.

[*Flourish and shout.*]

BRU. What means this shouting ? I do fear, the  
people  
Choose Cæsar for their king.

CAS. Ay, do you fear it ? 80  
Then must I think you would not have it so.

BRU. I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.  
But wherefore do you hold me here so long ?  
What is it that you would impart to me ?  
If it be aught toward the general good,  
Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,  
And I will look on both indifferently :  
For let the gods so speed me as I love  
The name of honour more than I fear death.

---

71 *jealous on*] suspicious of.

72 *laugher*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *Laughter*, which might mean "laughing-stock."

73 *To stale*] To vulgarise, make stale.

76 *scandal*] slander.

77 *profess myself*] make professions of friendship.

83 *hold*] detain.

87 *indifferently*] with impartiality, as things of the same calibre.

88 *speed me*] prosper me.

CAS. I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus, 90  
As well as I do know your outward favour.  
Well, honour is the subject of my story.  
I cannot tell what you and other men  
Think of this life, but, for my single self,  
I had as lief not be as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself.  
I was born free as Cæsar; so were you:  
We both have fed as well, and we can both  
Endure the winter's cold as well as he:  
For once, upon a raw and gusty day, 100  
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,  
Cæsar said to me "Darest thou, Cassius, now  
Leap in with me into this angry flood,  
And swim to yonder point?" Upon the word,  
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in  
And bade him follow: so indeed he did.  
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it  
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside  
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;  
But ere we could arrive the point proposed, 110  
Cæsar cried "Help me, Cassius, or I sink!"  
I, as Æneas our great ancestor  
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder  
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber  
Did I the tired Cæsar: and this man  
Is now become a god, and Cassius is

91 *outward favour*] external features, countenance.

109 *hearts of controversy*] hearts bent on contest (with the force of the tide).

112-114 *I, as Æneas . . . bear*] Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, V, ii, 62-63: "As did Æneas old Anchises bear, So bear I thee upon my manly shoulders."

A wretched creature, and must bend his body  
 If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.  
 He had a fever when he was in Spain,  
 And when the fit was on him, I did mark 120  
 How he did shake: 't is true, this god did shake;  
 His coward lips did from their colour fly,  
 And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world  
 Did lose his lustre: I did hear him groan:  
 Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans  
 Mark him and write his speeches in their books,  
 Alas, it cried, "Give me some drink, Titinius,"  
 As a sick girl. Ye gods! it doth amaze me  
 A man of such a feeble temper should  
 So get the start of the majestic world 130  
 And bear the palm alone. [Shout. Flourish.]

BRU. Another general shout!  
 I do believe that these applauses are  
 For some new honours that are heap'd on Cæsar.

CAS. Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
 Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
 Walk under his huge legs and peep about

122 *His coward lips . . . fly*] The forced figure is that of a cowardly  
 soldier running away from his colours or flag.

123 *bend*] glance.

129 *temper*] temperament, constitution.

130 *get the start of*] outstrip, attain first place in.

136 *Like a Colossus*] The Colossus was a bronze statue of a man, one  
 hundred and twenty feet high, whose legs were so fixed in the harbour  
 of Rhodes that ships sailed between them. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, V, i, 123:  
 "Nothing but a *colossus* can do thee that friendship," Prince Henry's  
 reply to Falstaff's request that the prince should bestride him if he  
 fall in the battle.

To find ourselves dishonourable graves.  
 Men at some time are masters of their fates :  
 The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, 140  
 But in ourselves, that we are underlings.  
 Brutus, and Cæsar: what should be in that Cæsar?  
 Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
 Write them together, yours is as fair a name;  
 Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;  
 Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,  
 Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar.  
 Now, in the names of all the gods at once,  
 Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,  
 That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed! 150  
 Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!  
 When went there by an age, since the great flood,  
 But it was famed with more than with one man?  
 When could they say till now that talk'd of Rome  
 That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?  
 Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,  
 When there is in it but one only man.  
 O, you and I have heard our fathers say

---

141 *underlings*] inferior beings.

151 *bloods*] spirits, hearts.

152 *the great flood*] a reference to the great flood of classical mythology, in which Deucalion filled the part of the Biblical Noah. Deucalion is mentioned by name in *Cor.*, II, i, 85.

153 *famed with*] made famous by.

155 *wide walls*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *wide walks*, which has been explained as "spacious bounds."

156 *Rome . . . room*] "Rome" was commonly pronounced like "room."  
 Cf. III, i, 290, *infra*: "no *Rome* of safety."

There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd  
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome 160  
As easily as a king.

BRU. That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;  
What you would work me to, I have some aim:  
How I have thought of this and of these times,  
I shall recount hereafter; for this present,  
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,  
Be any further moved. What you have said  
I will consider; what you have to say  
I will with patience hear, and find a time  
Both meet to hear and answer such high things. 170  
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:  
Brutus had rather be a villager  
Than to repute himself a son of Rome  
Under these hard conditions as this time  
Is like to lay upon us.

CAS. I am glad that my weak words  
Have struck but this much show of fire from  
Brutus.

BRU. The games are done, and Cæsar is returning.

CAS. As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve;

---

159 *There was a Brutus once*] Lucius Junius Brutus, the legendary founder of the Roman republic, 509 B. C., who sentenced to death his own sons for conspiring to restore the monarchy.

160 *eternal*] commonly used to express abhorrence in the same manner as "infernal." Cf. *Othello*, IV, ii, 131: "*eternal villain*."

163 *What . . . some aim*] What you would induce me to do, I can give some guess.

171 *chew*] reflect. Cf. *As you like it*, IV, iii, 100: "*chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy*."

And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you  
What hath proceeded worthy note to-day. 180

*Re-enter CÆSAR and his Train*

BRU. I will do so: but, look you, Cassius,  
The angry spot doth glow on Cæsar's brow,  
And all the rest look like a chidden train:  
Calpurnia's cheek is pale, and Cicero  
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes  
As we have seen him in the Capitol,  
Being cross'd in conference by some senators.

CAS. Casca will tell us what the matter is.

CÆS. Antonius! 190

ANT. Cæsar?

CÆS. Let me have men about me that are fat,  
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights:  
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;  
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

ANT. Fear him not, Cæsar; he's not dangerous;  
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

CÆS. Would he were fatter! but I fear him not:  
Yet if my name were liable to fear,  
I do not know the man I should avoid 200  
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;  
He is a great observer, and he looks  
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,

184 *a chidden train*] a retinue of attendants who have been scolded.

192-195 *Let me have . . . dangerous*] Here Shakespeare closely develops hints given by North's rendering of Plutarch. *Sleek-headed* is Shakespeare's paraphrase of North's "smooth combed."

197 *well given*] well disposed.

As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music:  
 Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such 'a sort  
 As if he mock'd hi-nself, and scorn'd his spirit  
 That could be moved to smile at any thing.  
 Such men as he be never at heart's ease  
 Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,  
 And therefore are they very dangerous.  
 I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd  
 Than what I fear; for always I am Cæsar.  
 Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,  
 And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

210

[*Sennet. Exeunt Cæsar and all his Train but Casca.*]

CASCA. You pull'd me by the cloak; would you speak  
 with me?

BRU. Ay, Casca; tell us what hath chanced to-day,  
 That Cæsar looks so sad.

CASCA. Why, you were with him, were you not? 218

BRU. I should not then ask Casca what had chanced.

CASCA. Why, there was a crown offered him: and  
 being offered him, he put it by with the back of his  
 hand, thus: and then the people fell a-shouting.

BRU. What was the second noise for?

CASCA. Why, for that too.

CAS. They shouted thrice: what was the last cry for?

CASCA. Why, for that too.

BRU. Was the crown offered him thrice?

CASCA. Ay, marry, was't, and he put it by thrice,

213 *this ear is deaf*] a touch of Shakespeare's invention.

217 *sad*] serious.

227 *Was the crown . . . thrice*] According to North, the offer of the  
 crown was only made twice.



every time gentler than other; and at every putting by mine honest neighbours shouted.

230

CAS. Who offered him the crown?

CASCA. Why, Antony.

BRU. Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

CASCA. I can as well be hang'd as tell the manner of it: it was mere foolery; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown: yet 't was not a crown neither, 't was one of these coronets: and, as I told you, he put it by once: but for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again: but, to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by: and still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted and clapped their chopped hands and threw up their sweaty night-caps and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Cæsar refused the crown, that it had almost choked Cæsar; for he swounded and fell down at it: and for mine own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

240

CAS. But, soft, I pray you: what, did Cæsar swound?

CASCA. He fell down in the market-place and foamed at mouth and was speechless.

---

243 *hooted*] The first three Folios read *howted*; the Fourth Folio reads *houted*. Hanmer substituted *shouted*. "Hooted," in its ordinary sense of disapproval, fits the context. Cf. line 258, *infra*, where the people is said to have both clapped Cæsar and hissed him with equal readiness.

244 *chopped*] chapped, disfigured with wrinkles.

247 *swounded*] The Folios read *swoonded*, for which Rowe substituted *swooned*. "Swounded" was the common Elizabethan usage.

BRU. 'T is very like: he hath the falling-sickness.

CAS. No, Cæsar hath it not: but you, and I,  
And honest Casca, we have the falling-sickness.

CASCA. I know not what you mean by that, but I am sure Cæsar fell down. If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man.

260

BRU. What said he when he came unto himself?

CASCA. Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, he plucked me ope his doublet and offered them his throat to cut. An I had been a man of any occupation, if I would not have taken him at a word, I would I might go to hell among the rogues. And so he fell. When he came to himself again, he said, if he had done or said any thing amiss, he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity. Three or four wenches, where I stood, cried "Alas, good soul!" and forgave him with all their hearts: but there's no heed to be taken of them; if Cæsar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done no less.

BRU. And after that, he came, thus sad, away?

CASCA. Ay.

CAS. Did Cicero say any thing?

CASCA. Ay, he spoke Greek.

---

253 *the falling-sickness*] a colloquial name for "epilepsy."

255 *the tag-rag people*] the riffraff.

259 *use to do*] are in the habit of clapping and hissing.

264 *he plucked me ope*] "me" is the ethic dative.

265 *a man of any occupation*] a workman, an artisan.

CAS. To what effect?

279

CASCA. Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i' the face again: but those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but for mine own part, it was Greek to me. I could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Cæsar's images, are put to silence. Fare you well. There was more foolery yet, if I could remember it.

CAS. Will you sup with me to-night, Casca?

CASCA. No, I am promised forth.

CAS. Will you dine with me to-morrow?

CASCA. Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold, and your dinner worth the eating.

291

CAS. Good; I will expect you.

CASCA. Do so: farewell, both.

[Exit.

BRU. What a blunt fellow is this grown to be! He was quick mettle when he went to school.

CAS. So is he now in execution

Of any bold or noble enterprise,

However he puts on this tardy form.

This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,

Which gives men stomach to digest his words

300

With better appetite.

BRU. And so it is. For this time I will leave you: To-morrow, if you please to speak with me, I will come home to you, or, if you will, Come home to me and I will wait for you.

284-285 *pulling scarfs . . . images*] Cf. I, i, 65, 66, and note.

285 *put to silence*] reproved.

288 *promised forth*] already engaged.

290 *and your mind hold*] and you still wish me to come.

ˆCAS. I will do so: till then, think of the world.

[*Exit Brutus.*]

Well, Brutus, thus art noble; yet, I see,  
 Thy honourable metal may be wrought  
 From that it is disposed: therefore it is meet  
 That noble minds keep ever with their likes; 310  
 For who so firm that cannot be seduced?  
 Cæsar doth bear me hard; but he loves Brutus:  
 If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius,  
 He should not humour me. I will this night,  
 In several hands, in at his windows throw,  
 As if they came from several citizens,  
 Writings, all tending to the great opinion  
 That Rome holds of his name, wherein obscurely  
 Cæsar's ambition shall be glanced at:  
 And after this let Cæsar seat him sure; 320  
 For we will shake him, or worse days endure. [*Exit.*]

309 *From that it is disposed*] From its natural disposition. "Disposed" is here equivalent to "disposed to."

312 *bear me hard*] has a grudge against me; uses me harshly; a figure from a cruel rider who carries a tight rein. Cf. the Latin "*ægre ferre*." See line 35, *supra*, and II, i, 215, *infra*.

314 *He should not humour me*] Commentators differ as to whether *He* refers to Brutus or to Cæsar. Some think Cassius means "(If Brutus and I changed places) Brutus should not work on me (as I am working on him)," in view of Cæsar's love of Brutus. But there seems more point in the interpretation: "If Brutus and I were to change places, Cæsar, despite his affection for me, should not cajole me (into forgetting my principles)." In the lines that follow, Cassius plainly says that he is taking measures to counteract Cæsar's influence over Brutus.

315 *hands*] handwritings.

319 *glanced at*]. hit at, censured.

## SCENE III — A STREET

*Thunder and lightning. Enter, from opposite sides, CASCA, with his sword drawn, and CICERO*

CIC. Good even, Casca: brought you Cæsar home?  
Why are you breathless? and why stare you so?

CASCA. Are you not moved, when all the sway of  
earth

Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,  
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds  
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen  
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,  
To be exalted with the threatening clouds;  
But never till to-night, never till now,  
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.  
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,  
Or else the world too saucy with the gods  
Incenses them to send destruction.

10

CIC. Why, saw you any thing more wonderful?

CASCA. A common slave — you know him well by  
sight —

Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn  
Like twenty torches join'd, and yet his hand  
Not sensible of fire remain'd unscorch'd.

1 *brought you Cæsar home?*] did you escort Cæsar home?

3 *all the sway of earth*] the whole constitution of the earth, its steady  
balance or poise.

8 *To be exalted*] So as to be exalted.

Besides — I ha' not since put up my sword —  
 Against the Capitol I met a lion, 20  
 Who glazed upon me and went surly by  
 Without annoying me: and there were drawn  
 Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women  
 Transformed with their fear, who swore they saw  
 Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.  
 And yesterday the bird of night did sit  
 Even at noon-day upon the market-place,  
 Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies  
 Do so conjointly meet, let not men say  
 "These are their reasons: they are natural:" 30  
 For, I believe, they are portentous things  
 Unto the climate that they point upon.

CIC. Indeed, it is a strange-disposed time:  
 But men may construe things after their fashion,  
 Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.  
 Comes Cæsar to the Capitol to-morrow?

CASCA. He doth; for he did bid Antonius  
 Send word to you he would be there to-morrow.

CIC. Good night then, Casca: this disturbed sky  
 Is not to walk in.

CASCA. Farewell, Cicero. [Exit Cicero. 40]

---

21 *glazed*] stared or glared; still used in dialects. Cf. Peele's *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* (Scene xxii, l. 295): "that *glazing* star," and Lyly's *Euphues* (ed. Arber, p. 91, l. 12): "the *glaze*-worme (*i. e.*, glow-worm), which shineth most bright in the darke." Rowe needlessly substituted *glar'd* for *glazed*.

22-23 *drawn Upon a heap*] collected into a crowd or mob.

26 *the bird of night*] the owl.

32 *climate*] clime, region.

---

*Enter CASSIUS*

CAS. Who's there?

CASCA. A Roman.

CAS. Casca, by your voice.

CASCA. Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this!

CAS. A very pleasing night to honest men.

CASCA. Who ever knew the heavens menace so?

CAS. Those that have known the earth so full of faults.

For my part, I have walk'd about the streets,  
Submitting me unto the perilous night,  
And thus unbraced, Casca, as you see,  
Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone;  
And when the cross blue lightning seem'd to open 50  
The breast of heaven, I did present myself  
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

CASCA. But wherefore did you so much tempt the heavens?

It is the part of men to fear and tremble  
When the most mighty gods by tokens send  
Such dreadful heralds to astonish us.

CAS. You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life  
That should be in a Roman you do want,  
Or else you use not. You look pale and gaze

---

48 *unbraced*] with doublet unbuttoned. Cf. II, i, 262, *infra*.

49 *the thunder-stone*] the thunderbolt, which was supposed to fall with each flash of lightning. Cf. *Othello*, V, ii, 237-238: "Are there no stones in heaven But what serve for the *thunder*?"

50 *cross*] forked, zigzag.

And put on fear and cast yourself in wonder, 60  
 To see the strange impatience of the heavens :  
 But if you would consider the true cause  
 Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,  
 Why birds and beasts from quality and kind,  
 Why old men fool and children calculate,  
 Why all these things change from their ordinance,  
 Their natures and preformed faculties,  
 To monstrous quality, why, you shall find  
 That heaven hath infused them with these spirits  
 To make them instruments of fear and warning 70  
 Unto some monstrous state.  
 Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man  
 Most like this dreadful night,  
 That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars  
 As doth the lion in the Capitol,  
 A man no mightier than thyself or me

60 *cast yourself in wonder*] fling yourself into a state of wonder. Many editors substitute *case* (*i. e.*, clothe) for *cast*, quoting *Much Ado*, IV, i, 144: "I am so *attired in wonder*." But no change is necessary.

64 *from quality and kind*] contrary to their vocation (or disposition) and nature. For "quality" cf. line 68, *infra*.

65 *Why old men . . . calculate*] *Fool* (*i. e.*, play the fool) is Mitford's correction of the Folio reading *fools*, which might of course be an example of the no uncommon construction of a verb in the singular with a plural subject. It is probable, however, that by "old men" Shakespeare intended persons not of veteran experience, but of mental senility, of senile idiocy and that "fools" and "children" are homologous subjects of the verb "calculate." "Calculate" means "fore-tell," "show prophetic wisdom."

66 *ordinance*] ordained, appointed character.

67 *preformed faculties*] faculties with which they were originally endowed.

71 *Unto some monstrous state*] Respecting some abnormal condition of things.



In personal action, yet prodigious grown  
And fearful, as *these strange eruptions* are.

CASCA. 'Tis Cæsar that you mean; is it not,  
Cassius?

CAS. Let it be who it is: for Romans now 80  
Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors;  
But, woe the while! our fathers' minds are dead,  
And we are govern'd with our mothers' spirits;  
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

CASCA. Indeed they say the senators to-morrow  
Mean to establish Cæsar as a king;  
And he shall wear his crown by sea and land,  
In every place save here in Italy.

CAS. I know where I will wear this dagger then: 90  
Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius.  
Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong;  
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat:  
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,  
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,  
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;  
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,  
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.  
If I know this, know all the world besides,  
That part of tyranny that I do bear  
I can shake off at pleasure. [Thunder still.]

CASCA. So can I: 100

77-78 *prodigious grown And fearful*] grown into a prodigy or portent and causing fear.

91 *Therein*] In the power of suicide. Cf. *infra*, V, i, 96 *seq.*

95 *Can be retentive . . . spirit*] Can hold in or repress the strength of man's spirit.

So every bondman in his own hand bears  
The power to cancel his captivity.

CAS. And why should Cæsar be a tyrant then?  
Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf  
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep:  
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.  
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire  
Begin it with weak straws: what trash is Rome,  
What rubbish and what offal, when it serves  
For the base matter to illuminate 110  
So vile a thing as Cæsar! But, O grief,  
Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this  
Before a willing bondman; then I know  
My answer must be made. But I am arm'd,  
And dangers are to me indifferent.

CASCA. You speak to Casca, and to such a man  
That is no fleering tell-tale. Hold, my hand:  
Be factious for redress of all these griefs,  
And I will set this foot of mine as far  
As who goes farthest.

CAS. There's a bargain made. 120  
Now know you, Casca, I have moved already  
Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans

101-102 *bondman . . . cancel*] There is an obvious quibble on bondman  
in the double sense of a slave (*i. e.*, a man in bonds or fetters), and  
a man who is subject to a bond or legal obligation.

114 *My answer must be made*] I must answer (to Cæsar) for my out-  
spokenness.

117 *fleering*] grinning fawningly.

118 *Be factious for redress*] Form a party or faction for redress. There  
seems small ground for Johnson's interpretation of "factious" as  
"active."

To undergo with me an enterprise  
 Of honourable-dangerous consequence;  
 And I do know, by this they stay for me  
 In Pompey's porch: for now, this fearful night,  
 There is no stir or walking in the streets,  
 And the complexion of the element  
 In favour's like the work we have in hand,  
 Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

130

*Enter CINNA*

CASCA. Stand close awhile, for here comes one in haste.

CAS. 'T is Cinna; I do know him by his gait;  
 He is a friend. Cinna, where haste you so?

CIN. To find out you. Who's that? Metellus Cimber?

CAS. No, it is Casca; one incorporate  
 To our attempts. Am I not stay'd for, Cinna?

CIN. I am glad on't. What a fearful night is this!  
 There's two or three of us have seen strange sights.

CAS. Am I not stay'd for? tell me.

CIN.

Yes, you are.

O Cassius, if you could

140

But win the noble Brutus to our party —

CAS. Be you content: good Cinna, take this paper,

126 *Pompey's porch*] A spacious portico outside the theatre built by Pompey in the Campus Martius. In a chamber or "curia" attached to the theatre, the senate occasionally met, and it was at a meeting of the senate there that, according to Plutarch, Cæsar was assassinated. Cf. line 152, *infra*. Shakespeare transfers the scene of Cæsar's death to the Capitol. See III, i, 12 and 116, *infra*.

129 *In favour's like*] Resembles in face or feature. This is Johnson's correction of the Folio reading *Is favours, like*.

131 *Stand close*] Keep concealed.

And look you lay it in the prætor's chair,  
Where Brutus may but find it, and throw this  
In at his window; set this up with wax  
Upon old Brutus' statue: all this done,  
Repair to Pompey's porch, where you shall find us.  
Is Decius Brutus and Trebonius there?

CIN. All but Metellus Cimber; and he's gone  
To seek you at your house. Well, I will hie, 150  
And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

CAS. That done, repair to Pompey's theatre.

[*Exit Cinna.*]

Come, Casca, you and I will yet ere day  
See Brutus at his house: three parts of him  
Is ours already, and the man entire  
Upon the next encounter yields him ours.

CASCA. O, he sits high in all the people's hearts;  
And that which would appear offence in us  
His countenance, like richest alchemy,  
Will change to virtue and to worthiness. 160

CAS. Him and his worth and our great need of him  
You have right well conceited. Let us go,  
For it is after midnight, and ere day  
We will awake him and be sure of him. [*Exeunt.*]

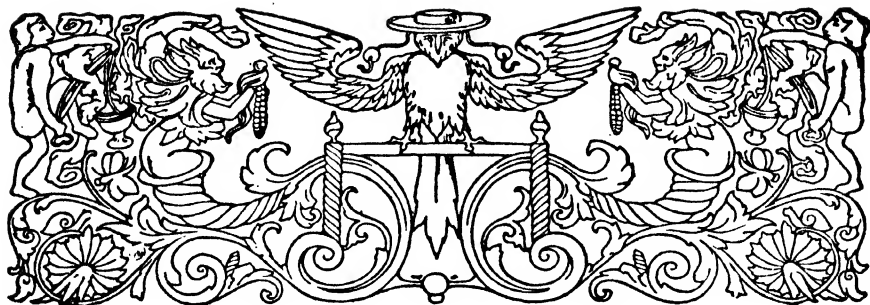
144 *Where Brutus . . . find it*] Where only Brutus, none but he, may find it.

146 *old Brutus' statue*] the statue of Lucius Junius Brutus. Cf. I, ii, 158, *supra*.

148 *Decius*] See note on I, ii, 1 (stage direction).

152 *Pompey's theatre*] Cf. line 126, *supra*.

162 *conceited*] conceived, imagined.



## ACT SECOND — SCENE I — ROME

### BRUTUS'S ORCHARD

*Enter BRUTUS*

BRUTUS



HAT, LUCIUS, HO!

I cannot, by the progress of the stars,

Give guess how near to day.

Lucius, I say!

I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.

When, Lucius, when? awake, I say! what, Lucius!

*Enter LUCIUS*

LUC. Call'd you, my lord?

BRU. Get me a taper in my study, Lucius:

When it is lighted, come and call me here.

LUC. I will, my lord.

[*Exit.*

BRU. It must be by his death: and, for my part, 10

5 *When . . . when?*] a common interjection of impatience.

I know no personal cause to spurn at him,  
 But for the general. He would be crown'd:  
 How that might change his nature, there's the question:  
 It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;  
 And that craves wary walking. Crown him? — that; —  
 And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,  
 That at his will he may do danger with.  
 The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins  
 Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Cæsar,  
 I have not known when his affections sway'd 20  
 More than his reason. But 't is a common proof,  
 That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,  
 Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;  
 But when he once attains the upmost round,  
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,  
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees  
 By which he did ascend: so Cæsar may;  
 Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel  
 Will bear no colour for the thing he is,  
 Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented, 30  
 Would run to these and these extremities:

12 *for the general*] in the interest of the public at large. Cf. *Hamlet*, II,  
 ii, 430–431: “caviare to the general.”

15 *that; —*] elliptical for “Let us assume that much.”

19 *Remorse*] Conscientious consideration for others.

20–21 *his affections sway'd More*] his passions or feelings had greater  
 influence.

21 *proof*] fact, experience.

28–29 *since the quarrel . . . he is*] since there is no possible pretext for  
 quarrelling with Cæsar on the ground of anything he is by nature (or  
 has yet done). Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, III, i, 236: “But yet we want a colour  
 for his death.”

And therefore think him as a serpent's egg  
Which hatch'd would as his kind grow mischievous,  
And kill him in the shell.

*Re-enter LUCIUS*

LUC. The taper burneth in your closet, sir.  
Searching the window for a flint I found  
This paper thus seal'd up, and I am sure  
It did not lie there when I went to bed.

*[Gives him the letter.]*

BRU. Get you to bed again; it is not day.  
Is not to-morrow, boy, the ides of March?

40

LUC. I know not, sir.

BRU. Look in the calendar and bring me word.

LUC. I will, sir.

*[Exit.]*

BRU. The exhalations whizzing in the air  
Give so much light that I may read by them.

*[Opens the letter and reads.]*

"Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake and see thyself.  
Shall Rome, &c. Speak, strike, redress.  
Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake."

Such instigations have been often dropp'd  
Where I have took them up.

50

"Shall Rome, &c." Thus must I piece it out:  
Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What, Rome?

40 *ides*] Theobald's emendation of the Folio reading *first*. Brutus obviously has in mind the soothsayer's warning about "the *ides* of March," I, ii, 18 *seq.*, *supra*. Shakespeare probably wrote *first*, because Plutarch in one passage mentions that day as having been originally fixed for the meeting of the senate.

44 *exhalations*] meteors. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 310-311: "do you see these *meteors*? do you behold these *exhalations*?"

My ancestors did from the streets of Rome  
 The Tarquin drive, when he was call'd a king.  
 "Speak, strike, redress." Am I entreated  
 To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise,  
 If the redress will follow, thou receivest  
 Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!

*Re-enter LUCIUS*

LUC. Sir, March is wasted fifteen days.

*[Knocking within.]*

BRU. 'T is good. Go to the gate; somebody knocks. 60

*[Exit Lucius.]*

Since Cassius first did whet me against Cæsar  
 I have not slept.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
 And the first motion, all the interim is  
 Like a phantasma or a hideous dream:  
 The Genius and the mortal instruments  
 Are then in council, and the state of man,

59 *fifteen days*] Thus the Folios. The context shows that it was the evening of the day before the fifteenth.

64 *motion*] impulse, prompting.

65 *phantasma*] phantom of the imagination, nightmare.

66 *The Genius . . . instruments*] The immortal soul or spirit of a man which suggests his actions, and the perishable bodily organs, called by Macbeth (I, vii, 80) "corporal agent," which carry out the suggestions of the "Genius." Shakespeare uses the word "Genius" somewhat vaguely. But he has in mind the external "demon" or spirit which according to the Greek religion was appointed to watch over each human being and to guide his conduct. Cf. *Macb.*, III, i, 55, 56: "My *Genius* is rebuked, as it is said Mark Antony's was by Cæsar."

67-69 *the state of man . . . insurrection*] Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, II, iii, 169-



## ACT II

*Re-enter* LUCIUS

BRU. Is he alone?

**BRU.** Do you know them?

BRU.                    Let 'em enter.            [*Exit Lucius.*]

171: "twixt his mental and his active parts Kingdom'd Achilles  
(*i. e.*, Achilles likened to a kingdom) in commotion rages And battles  
down himself."

83 *if thou . . . semblance on*] if thou walk in thy true semblance. "Path" means tread a path, or walk. The rare verb is occasionally used transitively; cf. Drayton's *Heroical Epistles*, xiv, 91: "pathing . . . un-

Not Erebus itself were dim enough  
To hide thee from prevention.

*Enter the conspirators, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, CINNA, METELLUS  
CIMBER, and TREBONIUS*

CAS. I think we are too bold upon your rest:  
Good morrow, Brutus; do we trouble you?

BRU. I have been up this hour, awake all night.  
Know I these men that come along with you?

CAS. Yes, every man of them; and no man here 90  
But honours you; and every one doth wish  
You had but that opinion of yourself  
Which every noble Roman bears of you.  
This is Trebonius.

BRU. He is welcome hither.

CAS. This, Decius Brutus.

BRU. He is welcome too.

CAS. This, Casca; this, Cinna; and this, Metellus  
Cimber.

BRU. They are all welcome.  
What watchful cares do interpose themselves  
Betwixt your eyes and night?

CAS. Shall I entreat a word? [*They whisper.*] 100

DEC. Here lies the east: doth not the day break here?

CASCA. No.

---

advised ways." "Thy native semblance on (*i. e.*, being on)" is an absolute clause.

84 *Erebus*] a dark region of Hades, the lower world. Cf. Ovid, *Metam.*, x, 76, xiv, 404.

85 *prevention*] detection, which would lead to prevention.

95 *Decius*] See note on I, ii, 1 (stage direction).

CIN. O, pardon, sir, it doth, and yon grey lines  
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.

CASCA. You shall confess that you are both deceived.  
Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises ;  
Which is a great way growing on the south,  
Weighing the youthful season of the year.  
Some two months hence up higher toward the north  
He first presents his fire, and the high east  
Stands as the Capitol, directly here. 110

BRU. Give me your hands all over, one by one.

CAS. And let us swear our resolution.

BRU. No, not an oath : if not the face of men,  
The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse, —  
If these be motives weak, break off betimes,  
And every man hence to his idle bed ;  
So let high-sighted tyranny range on  
Till each man drop by lottery. But if these,  
As I am sure they do, bear fire enough 120  
To kindle cowards and to steel with valour  
The melting spirits of women, then, countrymen,

107 *growing on*] encroaching on, advancing towards.

108 *Weighing*] Considering.

110 *the high east*] the east at its culminating point.

112 *all over*] all in succession.

114 *the face of men*] the anxiety written in every countenance.

115 *the time's abuse*] the wrongs or grievances of the age.

118 *high-sighted*] haughty, arrogant.

119 *by lottery*] by compulsorily drawing lots. In suppressing an insurrection it was customary for every tenth man drawn by lot to be executed. Cf. IV, i, 16-17, *infra*, "prick'd to die In our black sentence and proscription," and *Tim. of Ath.*, V, iv, 31: "By decimation and a tithed death."

What need we any spur but our own cause  
To prick us to redress? what other bond  
Than secret Romans that have spoke the word,  
And will not palter? and what other oath  
Than honesty to honesty engaged  
That this shall be or we will fall for it?  
Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous,  
Old feeble carrions and such suffering souls 130  
That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear  
Such creatures as men doubt: but do not stain  
The even virtue of our enterprise,  
Nor the insuppressive mettle of our spirits,  
To think that or our cause or our performance  
Did need an oath; when every drop of blood  
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,  
Is guilty of a several bastardy  
If he do break the smallest particle  
Of any promise that hath pass'd from him. 140  
CAS. But what of Cicero? shall we sound him?  
I think he will stand very strong with us.  
CASCA. Let us not leave him out.  
CIN. No, by no means.  
MET. O, let us have him, for his silver hairs  
Will purchase us a good opinion,  
And buy men's voices to commend our deeds:

---

126 *palter*] equivocate.

129 *cautelous*] crafty, deceitful.

130 *carrions*] corpses, carcases; a common word of contempt.

133 *even virtue*] calm, equable temper.

134 *insuppressive*] insuppressible, indomitable.

138 *a several bastardy*] a separate, distinct act of baseness or treachery.

It shall be said his judgement ruled our hands;  
Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,  
But all be buried in his gravity.

BRU. O, name him not: let us not break with him, 150  
For he will never follow any thing  
That other men begin.

CAS. Then leave him out.

CASCA. Indeed he is not fit.

DEC. Shall no man else be touch'd but only Cæsar?

CAS. Decius, well urged: I think it is not meet  
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Cæsar,  
Should outlive Cæsar: we shall find of him  
A shrewd contriver; and you know his means,  
If he improve them, may well stretch so far  
As to annoy us all: which to prevent, 160  
Let Antony and Cæsar fall together.

BRU. Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,  
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,  
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;  
For Antony is but a limb of Cæsar:  
Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.  
We all stand up against the spirit of Cæsar,  
And in the spirit of men there is no blood:  
O, that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit,  
And not dismember Cæsar! But, alas, 170  
Cæsar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends,  
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;

---

150 *break with*] communicate with.

158 *shrewd contriver*] mischievous intriguer.

164 *envy*] malice. Cf. 178, *infra*.

Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,  
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds:  
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,  
Stir up their servants to an act of rage  
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make  
Our purpose necessary and not envious:  
Which so appearing to the common eyes,  
We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers.  
And for Mark Antony, think not of him;  
For he can do no more than Cæsar's arm  
When Cæsar's head is off.

180

CAS. Yet I fear him,  
For in the ingrafted love he bears to Cæsar —  
BRU. Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him:  
If he love Cæsar, all that he can do  
Is to himself, take thought and die for Cæsar:  
And that were much he should, for he is given  
To sports, to wildness and much company.

TREB. There is no fear in him; let him not die; 190  
For he will live and laugh at this hereafter. [*Clock strikes.*]

BRU. Peace! count the clock.

CAS. The clock hath stricken three.

TREB. 'T is time to part.

CAS. But it is doubtful yet  
Whether Cæsar will come forth to-day or no;

---

178 *envious*] malicious. Cf. 164, *supra*.

187 *take thought*] grieve, turn melancholy; "thought" often means grief, sorrow, or melancholy, and the verb "think" has a like significance.

Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, III, xiii, 1: "*Think*, and die."

188 *that were much he should*] that would be difficult for him.

190 *no fear*] nothing to fear.

For he is superstitious grown of late,  
 Quite from the main opinion he held once  
 Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies:  
 It may be these apparent prodigies,  
 The unaccustom'd terror of this night  
 And the persuasion of his augurers,  
 May hold him from the Capitol to-day.

200

DEC. Never fear that: if he be so resolved,  
 I can o'ersway him; for he loves to hear  
 That unicorns may be betray'd with trees  
 And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,  
 Lions with toils and men with flatterers:  
 But when I tell him he hates flatterers,  
 He says he does, being then most flattered.  
 Let me work;

For I can give his humour the true bent,  
 And I will bring him to the Capitol.

210

CAS. Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

196 *from the main opinion*] contrary to the firm opinion.

197 *ceremonies*] omens, portents. Cf. II, ii, 13, *infra*: "I never stood on ceremonies," and note.

200 *augurers*] official interpreters of omens.

204 *unicorns . . . trees*] The fabulous unicorn, the beast with which the lion was traditionally in conflict, was said to be invincible except when the lion standing in front of a tree avoided the unicorn's charge by a sudden withdrawal, and left the unicorn to impale its horn in the tree trunk. This trick of the lion in fight with the unicorn is fully described in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Bk. II, Canto V, stanza x.

205 *bears . . . holes*] Bears were trapped by mirrors in which they paused to survey their images and thus gave the hunters their opportunity of successful attack. Elephants were caught in pits dug by hunters, and lightly covered with hurdles and turf, which the animals were induced to tread and fall into.

BRU. By the eighth hour: is that the uttermost?

CIN. Be that the uttermost, and fail not then.

MET. Caius Ligarius doth bear Cæsar hard,  
Who rated him for speaking well of Pompey:  
I wolder none of you have thought of him.

BRU. Now, good Metellus, go along by him:  
He loves me well, and I have given him reasons;  
Send him but hither, and I'll fashion him. 220

CAS. The morning comes upon 's: we'll leave you,  
Brutus:  
And, friends, disperse yourselves: but all remember  
What you have said and show yourselves true  
Romans.

BRU. Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily;  
Let not our looks put on our purposes;  
But bear it as our Roman actors do,  
With untired spirits and formal constancy:  
And so, good morrow to you every one.

[*Exeunt all but Brutus.*]

Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep! It is no matter;  
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber: 230  
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,

215 *Caius Ligarius*] Plutarch gives this name as *Quintus Ligarius*. *Caius* is North's error.

*bear Cæsar hard*] has a grudge against Cæsar. Cf. I, ii, 312, *supra*, and III, i, 158, *infra*.

219 *reasons*] *sc.*, for loving me.

225 *put on*] betray.

227 *formal constancy*] consistent dignity.

230 *honey-heavy*] charged with the sweetness of honey.

231 *figures*] vain fancies. Cf. *M. Wives*, IV, ii, 192-193: "if it be but to scrape the *figures* out of your husband's brains."



Which busy care draws in the brains of men;  
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

*Enter* PORTIA

POR. Brutus, my lord!

BRU. Portia, what mean you? wherefore rise you  
now?

It is not for your health thus to commit  
Your weak condition to the raw cold morning.

POR. Nor for yours neither. You've ungently,  
Brutus,

Stole from my bed: and yesternight at supper  
You suddenly arose and walk'd about,  
Musing and sighing, with your arms across; 240  
And when I ask'd you what the matter was,  
You stared upon me with ungentle looks:  
I urged you further; then you scratch'd your head,  
And too impatiently stamp'd with your foot:  
Yet I insisted, yet you answer'd not,  
But with an angry wafture of your hand  
Gave sign for me to leave you: so I did,  
Fearing to strengthen that impatience  
Which seem'd too much enkindled, and withal  
Hoping it was but an effect of humour, 250  
Which sometime hath his hour with every man.  
It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep,  
And, could it work so much upon your shape  
As it hath much prevail'd on your condition,

246 *wafture*] wave. Rowe's spelling of the Folios' *wafter*.

250 *humour*] caprice.

254 *condition*] temper, disposition.

I should not know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,  
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.

BRU. I am not well in health, and that is all.

POR. Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health,  
He would embrace the means to come by it.

BRU. Why, so I do: good Portia, go to bed. 260

POR. Is Brutus sick, and is it physical  
To walk unbraced and suck up the humours  
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick,  
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed,  
To dare the vile contagion of the night,  
And tempt the rheumy and unpurged air  
To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus;  
You have some sick offence within your mind,  
Which by the right and virtue of my place  
I ought to know of: and, upon my knees, 270  
I charm you, by my once commended beauty,  
By all your vows of love and that great vow  
Which did incorporate and make us one,  
That you unfold to me, yourself, your half,  
Why you are heavy, and what men to-night  
Have had resort to you; for here have been  
Some six or seven, who did hide their faces  
Even from darkness.

---

261 *physical*] natural, wholesome. Cf. *Cor.*, I, v, 18-19: "The blood I drop is rather *physical* Than dangerous to me."

262 *unbraced*] with doublet unbuttoned. Cf. I, iii, 48, *supra*.

266 *rheumy and unpurged*] damp and impure or corrupt.

268 *sick offence*] morbid obstruction.

271 *I charm you*] I conjure or adjure you.

BRU. Kneel not, gentle Portia.

POR. I should not need, if you were gentle Brutus.  
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus, 280  
Is it excepted I should know no secrets  
That appertain to you? Am I yourself  
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,  
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,  
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the  
suburbs

Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,  
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

BRU. You are my true and honourable wife,  
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops  
That visit my sad heart. 290

POR. If this were true, then should I know this secret.  
I grant I am a woman, but withal  
A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife:  
I grant I am a woman, but withal  
A woman well reputed, Cato's daughter.  
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,  
Being so father'd and so husbanded?  
Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose 'em:  
I have made strong proof of my constancy,  
Giving myself a voluntary wound 300  
Here in the thigh: can I bear that with patience  
And not my husband's secrets?

BRU. O ye gods,  
Render me worthy of this noble wife! [*Knocking within.*]  
Hark, hark! one knocks: Portia, go in a while;

---

285 *in the suburbs*] on the borders, not at the centre or heart.

And by and by thy bosom shall partake  
The secrets of my heart:  
All my engagements I will construe to thee,  
All the charactery of my sad brows.  
Leave me with haste. [*Exit Portia.*] Lucius, who's that  
knocks?

*Re-enter LUCIUS with LIGARIUS*

LUC. Here is a sick man that would speak with you.

BRU. Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of. 311

Boy, stand aside. Caius Ligarius! how?

LIG. Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.

BRU. O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,  
To wear a kerchief! Would you were not sick!

LIG. I am not sick, if Brutus have in hand  
Any exploit worthy the name of honour.

BRU. Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,  
Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.

LIG. By all the gods that Romans bow before, 320  
I here discard my sickness! Soul of Rome!

Brave son, derived from honourable loins!

Thou, like an exorcist, hast conjured up  
My mortified spirit. Now bid me run,  
And I will strive with things impossible,  
Yea, get the better of them. What's to do?

308 *charactery*] written symbols, characters (*i. e.*, of the written alphabet).

The word was commonly applied to "shorthand." It was accented  
on the second and fourth syllables.

313 *Vouchsafe*] Deign to accept.

315 *To wear a kerchief*] a common mode of treating illness.

323 *exorcist*] one who raises spirits. Cf. *All's Well*, V, iii, 298, and note.

324 *My mortified spirit*] My soul which was dead.

BRU. A piece of work that will make sick men whole.

LIG. But are not some whole that we must make sick?

BRU. That must we also. What it is, my Caius,  
I shall unfold to thee, as we are going 330  
To whom it must be done.

LIG. Set on your foot,  
And with a heart new-fired I follow you,  
To do I know not what: but it sufficeth  
That Brutus leads me on.

BRU. Follow me then. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE II — CÆSAR'S HOUSE

*Thunder and lightning. Enter CÆSAR, in his night-gown*

CÆS. Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace to-  
night:

Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out,  
“Help, ho! they murder Cæsar!” Who’s within?

*Enter a Servant*

SERV. My lord?

CÆS. Go bid the priests do present sacrifice,  
And bring me their opinions of success.

SERV. I will, my lord. [Exit.]

*Enter CALPURNIA*

CAL. What mean you, Cæsar? think you to walk  
forth?

You shall not stir out of your house to-day.

---

SCENE II (stage direction) *night-gown*] dressing-gown.

6 *success*] the result.

CÆS. Cæsar shall forth: the things that threaten'd 10  
me

Ne'er look'd but on my back; when they shall see  
The face of Cæsar, they are vanished.

CAL. Cæsar, I never stood on ceremonies,  
Yet now they fright me There is one within,  
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,  
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.  
A lioness hath whelped in the streets;  
And graves have yawn'd, and yielded up their dead;  
Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,  
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war, 20  
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;  
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,  
Horses did neigh and dying men did groan,  
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.  
O Cæsar! these things are beyond all use,  
And I do fear them.

CÆS. What can be avoided  
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?  
Yet Cæsar shall go forth; for these predictions  
Are to the world in general as to Cæsar.

CAL. When beggars die, there are no comets seen; 30  
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

CÆS. Cowards die many times before their deaths;  
The valiant never taste of death but once.  
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,  
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;

---

13 *stood on ceremonies*] attached importance to omens, portents. For  
"ceremonies" cf. note on I, i, 70, *supra*, and I, ii, 157, *supra*.

Seeing that death, a necessary end,  
Will come when it will come.

*Re-enter Servant*

What say the augurers?

SERV. They would not have you to stir forth to-day.  
Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,  
They could not find a heart within the beast. 40

CÆS. The gods do this in shame of cowardice:  
Cæsar should be a beast without a heart  
If he should stay at home to-day for fear.  
No, Cæsar shall not: danger knows full well  
That Cæsar is more dangerous than he:  
We are two lions litter'd in one day,  
And I the elder and more terrible:  
And Cæsar shall go forth.

CAL. Alas, my lord,  
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence. 50  
Do not go forth to-day: call it my fear  
That keeps you in the house and not your own.  
We'll send Mark Antony to the senate-house,  
And he shall say you are not well to-day:  
Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

CÆS. Mark Antony shall say I am not well,  
And, for thy humour, I will stay at home.

*Enter DECIVS*

Here's Decius Brutus, he shall tell them so.

DEC. Cæsar, all hail! good morrow, worthy Cæsar:  
I come to fetch you to the senate-house.

---

46 *We are*] Capell's emendation of the Folio reading *We hear*.

CÆS. And you are come in very happy time,  
 To bear my greeting to the senators  
 And tell them that I will not come to-day:  
 Cannot, is false, and that I dare not, falser:  
 I will not come to-day: tell them so, Decius.

CAL. Say he is sick.

CÆS. Shall Cæsar send a lie?  
 Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far,  
 To be afraid to tell graybeards the truth?  
 Decius, go tell them Cæsar will not come.

DEC. Most mighty Cæsar, let me know some cause,  
 Lest I be laugh'd at when I tell them so.

CÆS. The cause is in my will: I will not come;  
 That is enough to satisfy the senate.  
 But, for your private satisfaction,  
 Because I love you, I will let you know.  
 Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home:  
 She dreamt to-night she saw my statuë,  
 Which like a fountain with an hundred spouts  
 Did run pure blood, and many lusty Romans  
 Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it:  
 And these does she apply for warnings and portents  
 And evils imminent, and on her knee  
 Hath begg'd that I will stay at home to-day.

76 *statuë*] The Folios here read *Statue*. But *statua*, a trisyllable (as required here by the metre), was a more common form in Elizabethan poetry and prose. Bacon invariably wrote *statua*. Cf. III, ii, 188, *infra*. The compromise *statuë* is a suggestion of the Cambridge editors.

80 *And . . . portents*] Thus the Folios; an irregularly long line.

81 *And evils*] Thus the Folios; many editors substitute *Of evils*.



DEC. This dream is all amiss interpreted;  
 It was a vision fair and fortunate:  
 Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,  
 In which so many smiling Romans bathed,  
 Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck  
 Reviving blood, and that great men shall press  
 For tinctures, stains, relics and cognizance.  
 This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.

90

CÆS. And this way have you well expounded it.

DEC. I have, when you have heard what I can say:  
 And know it now: the senate have concluded  
 To give this day a crown to mighty Cæsar.  
 If you shall send them word you will not come,  
 Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock  
 Apt to be render'd, for some one to say  
 "Break up the senate till another time,  
 When Cæsar's wife shall meet with better dreams."  
 If Cæsar hide himself, shall they not whisper  
 "Lo, Cæsar is afraid"?  
 Pardon me, Cæsar, for my dear dear love

100

89 *tinctures . . . cognizance*] a reference to the habit of dipping handkerchiefs or napkins in the blood of saints or martyrs. The "cognizance," here "token" or "memento," is properly applied to a heraldic badge. Decius's interpretation of Calpurnia's dream, though it reassures Cæsar, has ironical significance.

93 *concluded*] determined.

96-97 *a mock . . . render'd*] a very likely sarcasm to be offered as rejoinder.

102-104 *my dear . . . liable*] my affectionate concern for your welfare bids me speak out thus, and the propriety of my thought is subservient to my love of you. In other words, reason might restrain my freedom of speech, but my love makes me frank.

To your proceeding bids me tell you this,  
And reason to my love is liable.

CÆS. How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!

I am ashamed I did yield to them.  
Give me my robe, for I will go.

*Enter* PUBLIUS, BRUTUS, LIGARIUS, METELLUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, and CINNA

And look where Publius is come to fetch me.

PUB. Good morrow, Cæsar.

CÆS. Welcome, Publius.

What, Brutus, are you stirr'd so early too? 110

Good morrow, Casca. Caius Ligarius,  
Cæsar was ne'er so much your enemy  
As that same ague which hath made you lean.  
What is 't o'clock?

BRU. Cæsar, 't is stricken eight.

CÆS. I thank you for your pains and courtesy.

*Enter* ANTONY

*Enter* ANTONY, that revels long o' nights,  
Withstanding up. Good morrow, Antony.  
So to most noble Cæsar.

s. Bid them prepare within:  
to blame to be thus waited for.

v, Cinna: now, Metellus: what, Trebonius! 120  
ave an hour's talk in store for you;  
member that you call on me to-day:  
near me, that I may remember you.

[REB. Cæsar, I will. *Aside.*] And so near will I be,  
at your best friends shall wish I had been further.

CÆS. Good friends, go in and taste some wine with me;  
And we like friends will straightway go together.

BRU. [*Aside.*] That every like is not the same, O  
Cæsar,  
The heart of Brutus yearns to think upon! [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III — A STREET NEAR THE CAPITOL

*Enter ARTEMIDORUS, reading a paper*

ART. "Cæsar, beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius; come not near Casca; have an eye to Cinna; trust not Trebonius; mark well Metellus Cimber: Decius Brutus loves thee not: thou hast wronged Caius Ligarius. There is but one mind in all these men, and it is bent against Cæsar. If thou beest not immortal, look about you: security gives way to conspiracy. The mighty gods defend thee!

Thy lover, ARTEMIDORUS."

Here will I stand till Cæsar pass along,  
And as a suitor will I give him this.  
My heart laments that virtue cannot live 10  
Out of the teeth of emulation.  
If thou read this, O Cæsar, thou mayst live;  
If not, the Fates with traitors do contrive. [*Exit.*]

129 *yearns*] Capell's emendation of the Folio reading *earns*, which is an old form of the same word. The lines imply that Cæsar's suave courtesy, and especially his use of the words "like friends," rouses a pang of remorse in Brutus's heart; it grieves him to the heart to think that men may be *like* friends, and not necessarily be really friends.

6 *security gives way to*] over-confidence opens the road to.

7 *Thy lover*] thy friend; a common usage. Cf. III, ii, 13 and 44, *infra*, V, i, 94.

11 *emulation*] jealousy, malicious rivalry.

13 *the Fates . . . contrive*] the Fates join with traitors in plotting (thy ruin).

SCENE IV—ANOTHER PART OF THE SAME STREET,  
BEFORE THE HOUSE OF BRUTUS*Enter PORCIA and LUCIUS*

POR. I prithee, boy, run to the senate-house;  
Stay not to answer me, but get thee gone.  
Why dost thou stay?

LUC. To know my errand, madam.

POR. I would have had thee there, and here again,  
Ere I can tell thee what thou shouldst do there.  
O constancy, be strong upon my side!  
Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue!  
I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.  
How hard it is for women to keep counsel!  
Art thou here yet?

LUC. Madam, what should I do? 10  
Run to the Capitol, and nothing else?  
And so return to you, and nothing else?

POR. Yes, bring me word, boy, if thy lord look  
well,  
For he went sickly forth: and take good note  
What Cæsar doth, what suitors press to him.  
Hark, boy! what noise is that?

LUC. I hear none, madam.

POR. Prithee, listen well:  
I heard a bustling rumour like a fray,  
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

LUC. Sooth, madam, I hear nothing.

---

6 *constancy*] firmness, resolution.

18 *a bustling rumour*] a murmur of tumult.

---

*Enter the Soothsayer*

- POR. Come hither, fellow: 20  
Which way hast thou been?  
SOOTH. At mine own house, good lady.  
POR. What is 't o'clock?  
SOOTH. About the ninth hour, lady.  
POR. Is Cæsar yet gone to the Capitol?  
SOOTH. Madam, not yet: I go to take my stand,  
To see him pass on to the Capitol.  
POR. Thou hast some suit to Cæsar, hast thou not?  
SOOTH. That I have, lady: if it will please Cæsar  
To be so good to Cæsar as to hear me,  
I shall beseech him to befriend himself.  
POR. Why, know'st thou any harm's intended  
towards him? 30  
SOOTH. None that I know will be, much that I fear  
may chance.  
Good morrow to you. Here the street is narrow:  
The throng that follows Cæsar at the heels,  
Of senators, of prætors, common suitors,  
Will crowd a feeble man almost to death:  
I'll get me to a place more void and there  
Speak to great Cæsar as he comes along. [Exit.]

---

(stage direction) *Enter the Soothsayer*] Thus the Folios. Rowe substituted *Enter Artemidorus*, on the ground that it was needless to duplicate these two characters, who perform identical functions of warning. But Plutarch introduces both the soothsayer and Artemidorus, whom he describes as a doctor of rhetoric in the Greek tongue, who was intimate with Brutus's confederates. In the next scene the Folios mark the entry of the two characters separately, and allot speeches to each.

POR. I must go in. Ay me, how weak a thing  
The heart of woman is! O Brutus,  
The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise! 40  
Sure, the boy heard me. Brutus hath a suit  
That Cæsar will not grant. O, I grow faint.  
Run, Lucius, and commend me to my lord;  
Say I am merry: come to me again,  
And bring me word what he doth say to thee.  
[*Exeunt severally.*]

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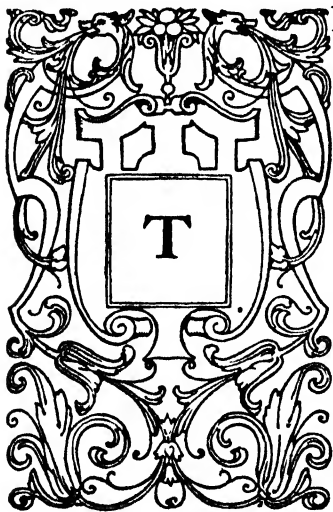
41-42 *Brutus . . . not grant*] These words are spoken to delude the boy, Lucius, who, she is afraid, has just overheard her reference to the true cause of her anxiety for her husband.



ACT THIRD — SCENE I — ROME  
BEFORE THE CAPITOL — THE SENATE  
SITTING ABOVE

*A crowd of people; among them ARTEMIDORUS and the Soothsayer.  
Flourish. Enter CÆSAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS,  
METELLUS, TREBONIUS, CINNA, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POPILI-  
IUS, PUBLIUS, and others*

CÆSAR



THE IDES OF MARCH ARE  
come.

SOOTH. Ay, Cæsar; but not  
gone.

ART. Hail, Cæsar! read this  
schedule.

DEC. Trebonius doth desire  
you to o'er-read,  
At your best leisure, this his  
humble suit.

ART. O Cæsar, read mine  
first; for mine's a suit  
That touches Cæsar nearer:  
read it, great Cæsar.

CÆS. What touches us ourself shall be last served.

ART. Delay not, Cæsar; read it instantly.

CÆS. What, is the fellow mad?

PUB. Sirrah, give place. 10

CAS. What, urge you your petitions in the street?  
Come to the Capitol.

*CÆSAR goes up to the Senate-house, the rest following*

POP. I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.

CAS. What enterprise, Popilius?

POP. Fare you well.

*[Advances to Cæsar.]*

BRU. What said Popilius Lena?

CAS. He wish'd to-day our enterprise might thrive.  
I fear our purpose is discovered.

BRU. Look, how he makes to Cæsar: mark him.

CAS. Casca,  
Be sudden, for we fear prevention.  
Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known, 20  
Cassius or Cæsar never shall turn back,  
For I will slay myself.

BRU. Cassius, be constant:  
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;  
For, look, he smiles, and Cæsar doth not change.

12 *the Capitol*] See note on I, iii, 126, *supra*, and III, i, 116, *infra*. According to Plutarch the Senate was meeting, not at the Capitol, but in Pompey's theatre.

20-22 *If this . . . slay myself*] If the plot be discovered, either Cassius or Cæsar shall never get away from here alive. At the worst, if Cæsar escape, I, Cassius, will slay myself. Cf. I, iii, 91, *supra*, and V, i, 96 *seq.*, *infra*.

22 *be constant*] be firm, do not flinch.

24 *change*] change colour, turn pale.



CAS. Trebonius knows his time ; for, look you, Brutus,  
He draws Mark Antony out of the way.

[*Exeunt Antony and Trebonius.*]

DEC. Where is Metellus Cimber ? Let him go,  
And presently prefer his suit to Cæsar.

BRU. He is address'd : press near and second him.

CIN. Casca, you are the first that rears your hand. 30

CÆS. Are we all ready ? What is now amiss  
That Cæsar and his senate must redress ?

MET. Most high, most mighty and most puissant  
Cæsar,

Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat

An humble heart : —

[*Kneeling.*]

CÆS. I must prevent thee, Cimber.

These couchings and these lowly courtesies

Might fire the blood of ordinary men,

And turn pre-ordinance and first decree

Into the law of children. Be not fond,

To think that Cæsar bears such rebel blood 40

That will be thaw'd from the true quality

With that which melteth fools, I mean, sweet words,

Low-crooked court'sies and base spaniel-fawning.

Thy brother by decree is banished :

29 *address'd*] ready.

35 *prevent*] anticipate.

36 *couchings*] cringings, stoopings.

38-39 *turn pre-ordinance . . . children*] turn enactments (which have already been ordained and decreed once for all) into children's law which is a mere passing whim, and lacks authority. The Folios read *lare* (for *law*) which is meaningless. The correction is due to Johnson.

If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,  
 I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.  
 Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause  
 Will he be satisfied.

MET. Is there no voice more worthy than my own,  
 To sound more sweetly in great Cæsar's ear 50  
 For the repealing of my banish'd brother?

BRU. I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Cæsar,  
 Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may  
 Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

CÆS. What, Brutus!

CAS. Pardon, Cæsar; Cæsar, pardon:  
 As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall,  
 To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

CÆS. I could be well moved, if I were as you;

---

47 *Cæsar . . . cause*] The sentence means "Cæsar is incapable of a wrong action, nor except on some very real and substantial ground would he be content (to entertain pardon of one whom he has punished)." Ben Jonson in his *Discoveries*, sec. 64, quoted, as one of Shakespeare's ridiculous errors, this passage in another form. According to Jonson, the character, whom Cæsar is here addressing, first interrupted him with the remark, "Cæsar, thou dost me wrong," to which Cæsar then replies, "Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause; and such like." If Jonson correctly cited the line as Shakespeare originally wrote it, Shakespeare probably used the word "wrong" in the sense of "injury" (cf. III, ii, 110, "Cæsar has had great *wrong*"), an interpretation which relieves the line of absurdity. Perhaps the two lines originally ran:

Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, but with just cause;  
 Nor without cause will he be satisfied.

It is often assumed that in deference to Jonson's censure, Shakespeare adopted the amended reading of the Folios.

51 *repealing*] recalling. Cf. line 54, *infra*, "repeal," i. e., recall.

If I could pray to move, prayers would move me: ' 60  
 But I am constant as the northern star,  
 Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality  
 There is no fellow in the firmament.  
 The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks;  
 They are all fire and every one doth shine;  
 But there's but one in all doth hold his place:  
 So in the world; 't is furnish'd well with men,  
 And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive:  
 Yet in the number I do know but one  
 That unassailable holds on his rank,  
 Unshaked of motion: and that I am he, 70  
 Let me a little show it, even in this;  
 That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,  
 And constant do remain to keep him so.

CIN. O Cæsar,—

CÆS. Hence! wilt thou lift up Olympus?

DEC. Great Cæsar, —

CÆS. Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

CASCA. Speak, hands, for me!

*[Casca first, then the other Conspirators and  
 Marcus Brutus stab Cæsar.]*

59 *If I could pray to move*] If I were of your calibre and could bring myself to seek to move another by my entreaties.

60 *constant*] firm, steadfast.

61 *resting*] immovable.

67 *apprehensive*] endowed with apprehension or intelligence.

69 *holds on his rank*] holds to his place.

70 *Unshaked of motion*] Undisturbed by movement (of others).

72-73 *constant*] resolute.

75 *Doth*] Thus the First Folio. The Second Folio substitutes *Do*, and converts the note of interrogation at the end of the line into a full

CÆS. Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Cæsar! [Dies.

CIN. Liberty! freedom! Tyranny is dead!  
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

CAS. Some to the common pulpits, and cry out 80  
“Liberty, freedom and enfranchisement!”

BRU. People, and senators, be not affrighted;  
Fly not; stand still: ambition's debt is paid.

CASCA. Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

DEC. And Cassius too.

BRU. Where's Publius?

CIN. Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.

MET. Stand fast together, lest some friend of Cæsar's  
Should chance —

BRU. Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer; 90  
There is no harm intended to your person,  
Nor to no Roman else: so tell them, Publius.

stop. Some commentators think Cæsar addresses himself here to the last speaker Decius (Brutus). But much dramatic point would thereby be lost. Nowhere in the play is Decius called by his surname.

77 *Et tu, Brute*] These words, which owe their proverbial acceptance to their appearance here, are not in Plutarch nor in any classical author. But Shakespeare did not invent them. They were in print in English books before Shakespeare wrote this play. The line “*Et tu, Brute? wilt thou stab Cæsar too?*” appears both in the *True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke*, 1595, the old play on which Shakespeare based the Third Part of *Hen. VI*, and in Nicholson's *Acolastus*, a poem printed in 1602. Probably, too, the words “*Et tu, Brute?*” figured in the lost Latin play of Julius Cæsar, which was acted at Oxford in 1582.

80 *the common pulpits*] public rostra or platforms in the forum and open spaces of the city, from which public officials and others were wont to address popular audiences. Cf. III, ii, 63, *infra*.

CAS. And leave us, Publius; lest that the people  
Rushing on us should do your age some mischief.

BRU. Do so: and let no man abide this deed  
But we the doers.

*Re-enter TREBONIUS*

CAS. Where is Antony?

TRE. Fled to his house amazed:  
Men, wives and children stare, cry out and run  
As it were doomsday.

BRU. Fates, we will know your pleasures:  
That we shall die, we know; 't is but the time, 100  
And drawing days out, that men stand upon.

CAS. Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life  
Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

BRU. Grant that, and then is death a benefit:  
So are we Cæsar's friends, that have abridged  
His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,  
And let us bathe our hands in Cæsar's blood  
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords:  
Then walk we forth, even to the market-place,  
And waving our red weapons o'er our heads, 110  
Let's all cry "Peace, freedom and liberty!"

CAS. Stoop then, and wash. How many ages hence

---

95 *abide*] suffer the consequences of. Cf. III, ii, 114, *infra*: "some will  
dear *abide* it."

101 *stand upon*] make of importance.

102-103 *Why, he that cuts off . . . death*] In the Folios these two lines  
are assigned to "Cask," which looks like a misprint for "Casca"  
rather than for "Cassius." Pope first gave them to Cassius. They  
seem equally appropriate to Casca.

Shall this our lofty scene be acted over  
In states unborn and accents yet unknown !

BRU. How many times shall Cæsar bleed in sport,  
That now on Pompey's basis lies along  
No worthier than the dust !

CAS. So oft as that shall be,  
So often shall the knot of us be call'd  
The men that gave their country liberty.

DEC. What, shall we forth ?

CAS. Ay, every man away : 120  
Brutus shall lead, and we will grace his heels  
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome.

*Enter a Servant*

BRU. Soft ! who comes here ? A friend of Antony's.

SERV. Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel ;  
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down ;  
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say :  
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant and honest ;  
Cæsar was mighty, bold, royal and loving :  
Say I love Brutus and I honour him ;  
Say I fear'd Cæsar, honour'd him and loved him. 130  
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony  
May safely come to him and be resolved

---

116 *Pompey's basis*] the base of Pompey's statue, which stood in the court of Pompey's theatre, which was, according to Plutarch, the scene of Cæsar's death, and not the Capitol, as Shakespeare represents it. Cf. I, iii, 126, and III, i, 12, *supra*.

118 *knot*] band.

123 *A friend of Antony's*] Plutarch makes Antony's messenger his son.

132 *resolved*] certified or fully informed.

How Cæsar hath deserved to lie in death,  
Mark Antony shall not love Cæsar dead  
So well as Brutus living, but will follow  
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus  
Thorough the hazards of this untrod state  
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.

BRU. Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman;  
I never thought him worse.

140

Tell him, so please him come unto this place,  
He shall be satisfied and, by my honour,  
Depart untouched.

SERV. I'll fetch him presently. *[Exit.]*

BRU. I know that we shall have him well to friend.

CAS. I wish we may: but yet have I a mind  
That fears him much, and my misgiving still  
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.

*Re-enter ANTONY*

BRU. But here comes Antony. Welcome, Mark  
Antony.

ANT. O mighty Cæsar! dost thou lie so low?  
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,  
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.  
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,  
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank:  
If I myself, there is no hour so fit

150

137 *Thorough*] a common variant of "through."

144 *have him well to friend*] have him altogether for friend.

146-147 *my misgiving . . . purpose*] my suspicion has a habit of coming unpleasantly near the mark.

158 *is rank*] is over-full (of blood), is in need of blood-letting. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 71: "a river that is *rank* [*i. e.*, overflowing]."

As Cæsar's death's hour nor no instrument  
 Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich  
 With the most noble blood of all this world.  
 I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,  
 Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,  
 Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years, 160  
 I shall not find myself so apt to die:  
 No place will please me so, no mean of death,  
 As here by Cæsar, and by you cut off,  
 The choice and master spirits of this age.  
 BRU. O Antony, beg not your death of us.  
 Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,  
 As, by our hands and this our present act,  
 You see we do; yet see you but our hands  
 And this the bleeding business they have done:  
 Our hearts you see not; they are pitiful; 170  
 And pity to the general wrong of Rome —  
 As fire drives out fire, so pity pity —  
 Hath done this deed on Cæsar. For your part,  
 To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony:  
 Our arms in strength of malice, and our hearts

158 *bear me hard*] harbour a grudge against me. Cf. I, ii, 312, and II, i, 215, *supra*.

160 *Live*] Should I live.

172 *As fire drives out fire*] A favourite proverbial allusion in Shakespeare. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, ii, 45: "one fire burns out another's burning." *Two Gent.*, II, iv, 188: "one heat another heat expels." *Cor.*, IV, vii, 54: "One fire drives out one fire."

175-176 *Our arms . . . receive you in*] Our arms in the intensity of hatred of Cæsar's misdeeds, and our hearts full of brotherly love for our countrymen welcome you among us.



Of brothers' temper, do receive you in  
With all kind love, good thoughts and reverence.

CAS. Your voice shall be as strong as any man's  
In the disposing of new dignities.

BRU. Only be patient till we have appeased 180  
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,  
And then we will deliver you the cause  
Why I, that did love Cæsar when I struck him,  
Have thus proceeded.

ANT. I doubt not of your wisdom.  
Let each man render me his bloody hand:  
First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you;  
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand;  
Now, Decius Brutus, yours; now yours, Metellus;  
Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours;  
Though last, not least in love, yours, good Trebonius. 190  
Gentlemen all, — alas, what shall I say?  
My credit now stands on such slippery ground,  
That one of two bad ways you must conceit me,  
Either a coward or a flatterer.  
That I did love thee, Cæsar, O, 't is true:  
If then thy spirit look upon us now,  
Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death,  
To see thy Antony making his peace,  
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes,  
Most noble! in the presence of thy corse? 200

178–179 *Your voice . . . dignities*] A characteristic reminder from the politician Cassius that the revolution may yield its leaders substantial profit.

193 *conceit me*] conceive or think of me.

197 *dearer*] more forcibly.

Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,  
 Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,  
 It would become me better than to close  
 In terms of friendship with thine enemies.  
 Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;  
 Here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand,  
 Sign'd in thy spoil and crimson'd in thy lethe.  
 O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;  
 And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.  
 How like a deer stricken by many princes 210  
 Dost thou here lie!

CAS. Mark Antony, —

ANT. Pardon me, Caius Cassius:  
 The enemies of Cæsar shall say this;  
 Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.

CAS. I blame you not for praising Cæsar so;  
 But what compact mean you to have with us?  
 Will you be prick'd in number of our friends,  
 Or shall we on, and not depend on you?

ANT. Therefore I took your hands, but was indeed  
 Sway'd from the point by looking down on Cæsar. 220  
 Friends am I with you all and love you all,

205 *bay'd, brave hart*] brought to bay, like a deer hunted by hounds.

207 *Sign'd . . . lethe*] Stained by thy slaughter and reddened by thy violent death. Hunters were wont to dip their hands in the blood of their prey after it yielded its last breath. Cf. *K. John*, II, i, 321–323, “And, like a jolly troop of huntsmen, come Our lusty English, all with purpled hands, Dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes.”

208–209 *hart . . . heart*] the same unimpressive quibble is found in *As you like it*, III, ii, 231, and *Tw. Night*, I, i, 21; IV, i, 58.

214 *cold modesty*] frigid moderation.

217 *prick'd in number of*] enrolled amongst. Cf. IV, i, 1, *infra*.

Upon this hope that you shall give me reasons  
Why and wherein Cæsar was dangerous.

BRU. Or else were this a savage spectacle:  
Our reasons are so full of good regard  
That were you, Antony, the son of Cæsar,  
You should be satisfied.

ANT. That's all I seek:  
And am moreover suitor that I may  
Produce his body to the market-place,  
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend, 230  
Speak in the order of his funeral.

BRU. You shall, Mark Antony.

CAS. Brutus, a word with you.  
[*Aside to Bru.*] You know not what you do: do not consent  
That Antony speak in his funeral:  
Know you how much the people may be moved  
By that which he will utter?

BRU. By your pardon:  
I will myself into the pulpit first,  
And show the reason of our Cæsar's death:  
What Antony shall speak, I will protest  
He speaks by leave and by permission, 240  
And that we are contented Cæsar shall  
Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.  
It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

CAS. I know not what may fall; I like it not.

BRU. Mark Antony, here, take you Cæsar's body.  
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,

---

225 *good regard*] just consideration, good motives.

229 *Produce . . . market-place*] Bear forth his body to the Forum.

But speak all good you can devise of Cæsar,  
And say you do't by our permission;  
Else shall you not have any hand at all  
About his funeral: and you shall speak 250  
In the same pulpit whereto I am going,  
After my speech is ended

ANT. Be it so;

I do desire no more.

BRU. Prepare the body then, and follow us.

*[Exeunt all but Antony.]*

ANT. O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,  
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!  
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man  
That ever lived in the tide of times.  
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!  
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy, 260  
Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips  
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue,  
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;  
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife  
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;  
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,  
And dreadful objects so familiar,  
That mothers shall but smile when they behold  
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;  
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds: 270  
And Cæsar's spirit ranging for revenge,  
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,

258 *the tide of times*] the course of the ages.

272 *Ate*] the goddess of discord in Greek mythology. Cf. *K. John*, II, i,

63: "An *Ate*, stirring him to blood and strife," and note.

Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice  
 Cry "Havoc," and let slip the dogs of war;  
 That this foul deed shall smell above the earth  
 With carrion men, groaning for burial.

*Enter a Servant*

You serve Octavius Cæsar, do you not?

SERV. I do, Mark Antony.

ANT. Cæsar did write for him to come to Rome.

SERV. He did receive his letters, and is coming; 280  
 And bid me say to you by word of mouth —

O Cæsar! *[Seeing the body.]*

ANT. Thy heart is big; get thee apart and weep.  
 Passion, I see, is catching, for mine eyes,  
 Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,  
 Began to water. Is thy master coming?

SERV. He lies to-night within seven leagues of  
 Rome.

ANT. Post back with speed, and tell him what hath  
 chanced:

Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,  
 No Rome of safety for Octavius yet; 290  
 Hie hence, and tell him so. Yet stay awhile;  
 Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corse  
 Into the market-place: there shall I try,

274 "Havoc"] No quarter! Cf. *K. John*, II, i, 357, and note.

*dogs of war*] Cf. *Hen. V*, I, Cho. 7: where the "hounds" of Mars are defined as "famine, sword and fire"; so too *1 Hen. VI*, IV, ii, 10-11.

284 *for mine eyes*] The Second Folio's correction of the First Folio reading *from mine eyes*.

290 *No Rome of safety*] Cf. I, ii, 156, *supra*: "Rome indeed, and room enough," and note.

In my oration, how the people take  
The cruel issue of these bloody men;  
According to the which, thou shalt discourse  
To young Octavius of the state of things.  
Lend me your hand. *[Exeunt with Cæsar's body.]*

## SCENE II — THE FORUM

*Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS, and a throng of Citizens*

CITIZENS. We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

BRU. Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.  
Cassius, go you into the other street,  
And part the numbers.  
Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;  
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;  
And public reasons shall be rendered  
Of Cæsar's death.

FIRST CIT. I will hear Brutus speak.

SEC. CIT. I will hear Cassius; and compare their  
reasons,

When severally we hear them rendered. 10

*[Exit Cassius, with some of the Citizens.]*

*Brutus goes into the pulpit.*

THIRD CIT. The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

BRU. Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause,  
and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine

---

295 *issue*] result of the action.

4 *part the numbers*] disperse the crowd.

13 *lovers*] friends. Cf. II, ii, 7, *supra*; line 44 *infra*.

honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against 20 Cæsar, this is my answer: not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all freemen? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude 30 that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

ALL. None, Brutus, none.

BRU. Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

---

16 *censure*] judge.

36-37 *The question . . . Capitol*] The statement of the reasons for his death is recorded in the records of the Senate.

38-39 *extenuated . . . enforced*] diminished or underrated . . . exagger-

*Enter ANTONY and others, with CÆSAR'S body*

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony: who, 40  
though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the  
benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as  
which of you shall not? With this I depart, — that, as  
I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the  
same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country  
to need my death.

ALL. Live, Brutus! live, live!

FIRST CIT. Bring him with triumph home unto his  
house.

SEC. CIT. Give him a statue with his ancestors.

THIRD CIT. Let him be Cæsar.

FOURTH CIT. Cæsar's better parts 50  
Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

FIRST CIT. We'll bring him to his house with shouts  
and clamours.

BRU. My countrymen, —

SEC. CIT. Peace! silence! Brutus speaks.

FIRST CIT. Peace, ho!

BRU. Good countrymen, let me depart alone,  
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:

Do grace to Cæsar's corpse, and grace his speech

Tending to Cæsar's glories, which Mark Antony

By our permission is allow'd to make.

I do entreat you, not a man depart,

Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

60  
[Exit.]

ated. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, V, ii, 124: "We will *extenuate* rather than  
*enforce*."

44 lover] friend. Cf. line 13, *supra*.



FIRST CIT. Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

THIRD CIT. Let him go up into the public chair;  
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

ANT. For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.

FOURTH CIT. What does he say of Brutus?  
[Goes into the pulpit.]

THIRD CIT. He says, for Brutus' sake,  
He finds himself beholding to us all.

FOURTH CIT. 'T were best he speak no harm of  
Brutus here.

FIRST CIT. This Cæsar was a tyrant.

THIRD CIT. Nay, that's certain:  
We are blest that Rome is rid of him. 70

SEC. CIT. Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.

ANT. You gentle Romans, —

ALL. Peace, ho! Let us hear him.

ANT. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your  
ears;

I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is oft interred with their bones;

So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus

Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious:

If it were so, it was a grievous fault,

And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it. 80

---

63 *the public chair*] the public rostrum (in the Forum). Cf. III, i, 80:  
"the common pulpits," *i. e.*, the public rostra.

65 *beholding*] under obligation, indebted; so line 67.

75-76 *The evil . . . their bones*] Cf. *Hen. VIII*, IV, ii, 45-46: "Men's  
evil manners live in brass; their virtues We write in water."

80 *answer'd it*] atoned for it.

Hère, under leave of Brutus and the rest, —  
For Brutus is an honourable man;  
So are they all, all honourable men, —  
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:  
But Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:  
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious? 90  
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept:  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And, sure, he is an honourable man.  
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, 100  
But here I am to speak what I do know.  
You all did love him once, not without cause:  
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?  
O judgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;  
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.  
FIRST CIT. Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

---

95 on the Lupercal] on the feast of Lupercalia. Cf. I, i, 68, *supra*.

SEC. CIT. If thou consider rightly of the matter,  
Cæsar has had great wrong.

THIRD CIT. Has he, masters? 110  
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

FOURTH CIT. Mark'd ye his words? He would not  
take the crown;

Therefore 't is certain he was not ambitious.

FIRST CIT. If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

SEC. CIT. Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with  
weeping.

THIRD CIT. There's not a nobler man in Rome than  
Antony.

FOURTH CIT. Now mark him, he begins again to  
speak.

ANT. But yesterday the word of Cæsar might  
Have stood against the world: now lies he there,  
And none so poor to do him reverence. 120

O masters, if I were disposed to stir  
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,  
I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,  
Who, you all know, are honourable men:  
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose  
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,  
Than I will wrong such honourable men.  
But here's a parchment with the seal of Cæsar;  
I found it in his closet; 't is his will:  
Let but the commons hear this testament — 130  
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read —

114 *dear abide it*] suffer bitterly the consequences of. Cf. III, i, 95, *supra*.

120 *none so poor . . . reverence*] not the humblest or meanest man is now  
willing to show him respect.

And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds  
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,  
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,  
And, dying, mention it within their wills,  
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy  
Unto their issue.

FOURTH CIT. We'll hear the will: read it, Mark  
Antony.

ALL. The will, the will! we will hear Cæsar's will.

ANT. Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read  
it;

It is not meet you know how Cæsar loved you. 141

You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;

And, being men, hearing the will of Cæsar,

It will inflame you, it will make you mad:

'T is good you know not that you are his heirs;

For if you should, O, what would come of it!

FOURTH CIT. Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;  
You shall read us the will, Cæsar's will.

ANT. Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?

I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it: 150

I fear I wrong the honourable men

Whose daggers have stabb'd Cæsar; I do fear it.

FOURTH CIT. They were traitors: honourable men!

ALL. The will! the testament!

SEC. CIT. They were villains, murderers: the will!  
read the will.

ANT. You will compel me then to read the will?

---

133 *napkins*] handkerchiefs.

150 *o'ershot myself*] gone beyond my intention.

Then make a ring about the corpse of Cæsar,  
And let me show you him that made the will.  
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

160

ALL. Come down.

SEC. CIT. Descend. [*He comes down from the pulpit.*]

THIRD CIT. You shall have leave.

FOURTH CIT. A ring; stand round.

FIRST CIT. Stand from the hearse, stand from the  
body.

SEC. CIT. Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

ANT. Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.

ALL. Stand back. Room! Bear back.

ANT. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle: I remember

170

The first time ever Cæsar put it on;

'T was on a summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the Nervii:

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:

See what a rent the envious Casca made:

Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;

And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,

Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors, to be resolved

If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no:

180

For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel:

---

173 *Nervii*] a warlike tribe, whom Cæsar defeated in his second campaign in Gaul in the summer of 57 B. C. Cæsar fully describes the exploit in his *Commentaries*

175 *envious*] malicious.

179 *to be resolved*] to learn for certain.

181 *angel*] good genius or dearest friend. There may be a faint allusion

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar loved him !  
 This was the most unkindest cut of all ;  
 For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,  
 Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,  
 Quite vanquish'd him : then burst his mighty heart ;  
 And, in his mantle muffling up his face,  
 Even at the base of Pompey's statuë,  
 Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.  
 O, what a fall was there, my countrymen !  
 Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,  
 Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.  
 O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel  
 The dint of pity : these are gracious drops.  
 Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold  
 Our Cæsar's vesture wounded ? Look you here,  
 Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

190

FIRST CIT. O piteous spectacle !

SEC. CIT. O noble Cæsar !

THIRD CIT. O woful day !

200

FOURTH CIT. O traitors, villains !

FIRST CIT. O most bloody sight !

SEC. CIT. We will be revenged.

---

to the Greek belief that a man was attended through life by a protecting genius or "daemon," already mentioned, II, i, 66, *supra*. But "angel" was not uncommonly used as a term of endearment, denoting affectionate intimacy. Cf. *Sonnet CXLIV*, 1-3: "Two loves I have of comfort and despair, . . . The better *angel* is a man right fair."

188 *statuë*] See note on II, ii, 76, *supra*, and cf. III, i, 116, and note.

194 *dint*] stroke or impression.

197 *marr'd* . . . *with*] defaced by. Cf. *M. Wives*, III, v, 97: "detected *with* (*i. e.*, by) a . . . bell-wether."

ALL. *Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!* Let not a traitor live!

ANT. Stay, countrymen.

FIRST CIT. Peace there! hear the noble Antony.

SEC. CIT. We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

ANT. Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir  
you up

210

To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honourable;

What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,

That made them do it: they are wise and honour-  
able,

And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:

I am no orator, as Brutus is;

But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,

That love my friend; and that they know full well

That gave me public leave to speak of him:

220

For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,

Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,

204-205 ALL. *Revenge! . . . live!* The Folios make these words a continuation of the second citizen's speech. The Cambridge editors first assigned them to the general body of citizens.

*About!* Move on, get to work.

208-209 SEC. CIT. *We'll . . . with him!* The Folios assign this speech to the second citizen. But it would be better to allot it to the general body, like 204-205, *supra*.

213 *private griefs!* personal grievances.

221 *wit!* knowledge, skill. The Second Folio's correction of the First Folio reading *writ*, which Johnson retained, and interpreted as "penned or premeditated oration."

To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;  
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;  
Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor poor dumb  
                    mouths,

And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,  
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony  
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue  
In every wound of Cæsar, that should move  
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

230

ALL. We'll mutiny.

FIRST CIT. We'll burn the house of Brutus.

THIRD CIT. Away, then ! come, seek the conspirators.

ANT. Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

ALL. Peace, ho ! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony !

ANT. Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:  
Wherein hath Cæsar thus deserved your loves?

Alas, you know not; I must tell you then:

You have forgot the will I told you of.

ALL. Most true: the will! Let's stay and hear the  
will.

240

ANT. Here is the will, and under Cæsar's seal.

To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every several man, seventy five drachmas.

SEC. CIT. Most noble Cæsar! we'll revenge his death.

THIRD CIT. O royal Cæsar!

**243** *several*] single, individual.

*drachmas*] Caesar left each Roman citizen 300 sesterces, which was the Roman coin commonly used in calculation. Shakespeare follows Plutarch in estimating the amount in Greek currency. A drachma was worth about 9 pence, or 18 cents, so that 75 drachmas were equivalent to about £2 16.0, or 14 dollars.



ANT. Hear me with patience.

ALL. Peace, ho!

ANT. Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,  
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,  
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you, 250  
And to your heirs for ever; common pleasures,  
To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.  
Here was a Cæsar! when comes such another?

FIRST CIT. Never, never. Come, away, away!  
We'll burn his body in the holy place,  
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.  
Take up the body.

SEC. CIT. Go fetch fire.

THIRD CIT. Pluck down benches.

FOURTH CIT. Pluck down forms, windows, any thing.  
[*Exeunt Citizens with the body.*]

ANT. Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot, 261  
Take thou what course thou wilt.

*Enter a Servant*

How now, fellow!

SERV. Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

ANT. Where is he?

SERV. He and Lepidus are at Cæsar's house.

ANT. And thither will I straight to visit him:  
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,  
And in this mood will give us any thing.

---

250 *On this side Tiber*] North has here drawn Shakespeare into error.  
Cæsar's gardens lay on the other side of the Tiber, on the opposite  
bank to that on which lay the Forum of the city. Cf. *Hor. Sat.*, I,  
ix, 18: "Trans Tiberim longe cubat is, *prope Cæsaris hortos.*"

251 *common pleasures*] public pleasure grounds.

SERV. I heard him say, Brutus and Cassius  
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome. 270

ANT. Belike they had some notice of the people,  
How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius.  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III — A STREET

*Enter CINNA the poet*

CIN. I dreamt to-night that I did feast with Cæsar,  
And things unluckily charge my fantasy:  
I have no will to wander forth of doors,  
Yet something leads me forth.

*Enter Citizens*

FIRST CIT. What is your name?

SEC. CIT. Whither are you going?

THIRD CIT. Where do you dwell?

FOURTH CIT. Are you a married man or a bachelor?

SEC. CIT. Answer every man directly.

FIRST CIT. Ay, and briefly. 10

FOURTH CIT. Ay, and wisely.

THIRD CIT. Ay, and truly, you were best.

CIN. What is my name? Whither am I going?  
Where do I dwell? Am I a married man or a bachelor?  
Then, to answer every man directly and briefly, wisely  
and truly: wisely I say, I am a bachelor.

SEC. CIT. That's as much as to say, they are fools

---

270 *Are rid*] Have ridden.

2 *things . . . fantasy*] circumstances oppress my imagination with evil  
omens.

12 *you were best*] it would be best for you.

that marry: you'll bear me a bang for that, I fear.  
Proceed; directly.

CIN. Directly, I am going to Cæsar's funeral. 20

FIRST CIT. As a friend or an enemy?

CIN. As a friend.

SEC. CIT. That matter is answered directly.

FOURTH CIT. For your dwelling, briefly.

CIN. Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.

THIRD CIT. Your name, sir, truly.

CIN. Truly, my name is Cinna.

FIRST CIT. Tear him to pieces; he's a conspirator.

CIN. I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

FOURTH CIT. Tear him for his bad verses, tear him 30  
for his bad verses.

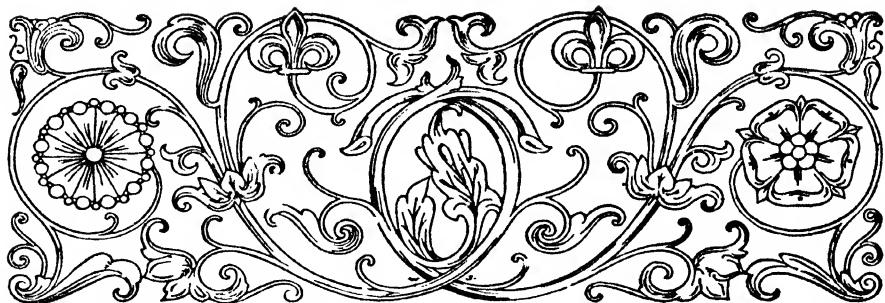
CIN. I am not Cinna the conspirator.

FOURTH CIT. It is no matter, his name's Cinna;  
pluck but his name out of his heart, and turn him going.

THIRD CIT. Tear him, tear him! Come, brands, ho!  
fire-brands: to Brutus', to Cassius'; burn all: some to  
Decius' house, and some to Casca's; some to Ligarius':  
away, go! [Exeunt.

---

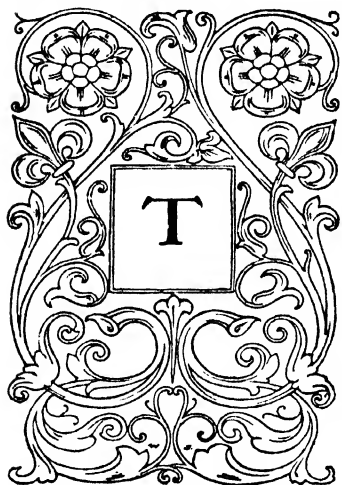
18 *you'll bear me a bang for that*] you'll come in for a blow from me for  
that jest.



ACT FOURTH — SCENE I  
A HOUSE IN ROME

ANTONY, OCTAVIUS, and LEPIDUS, seated at a table

ANTONY



THESE MANY THEN SHALL  
die; their names are prick'd.

OCT. Your brother too must  
die; consent you, Lepidus?

LEP. I do consent —

OCT. Prick him down, Antony.

LEP. Upon condition Publius  
shall not live,  
Who is your sister's son, Mark  
Antony.

ANT. He shall not live; look,  
with a spot I damn him.

But, Lepidus, go you to Cæsar's  
house;

Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine  
How to cut off some charge in legacies.

(stage direction) *A house in Rome*] The Folio lacks as usual any indication as to where the scene takes place. But line 11, *infra*, clearly shows it Shakespeare's intention to locate it in Rome. Plutarch makes the triumvirs meet "in an island environed round about with a river."

LEP. What, shall I find you here?

10

OCT. Or here, or at the Capitol. *[Exit Lepidus.]*

ANT. This is a slight unmeritable man,  
Meet to be sent on errands: is it fit,  
The three-fold world divided, he should stand  
One of the three to share it?

OCT. So you thought him,  
And took his voice who should be prick'd to die  
In our black sentence and proscription.

ANT. Octavius, I have seen more days than you:  
And though we lay these honours on this man,  
To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,  
He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,  
To groan and sweat under the business,  
Either led or driven, as we point the way;  
And having brought our treasure where we will,  
Then take we down his load and turn him off,  
Like to the empty ass, to shake his ears  
And graze in commons.

20

1 *prick'd*] put on the list, enrolled. Cf. III, i, 217, *supra*.

4-5 *Publius . . . your sister's son*] Shakespeare seems to have made some error here. Plutarch only mentions in this connection Lucius Cæsar, Antony's "uncle by his mother," Julia.

6 *with a spot I damn him*] with a black mark I condemn him.

12 *slight unmeritable*] insignificant, undeserving Cf. IV, iii, 37, *infra*.

14 *The three-fold world*] Cf. *K. John*, V, vii, 116: "the three corners of the world," and *Ant. and Cleop.*, IV, vi, 6: "the three-nook'd world." There is reference in each case to the division of the world into the three known continents—Europe, Asia, and Africa. The world's triplicity makes it appropriate spoil for a triumvirate.

26 *shake his ears*] Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, iii, 118: "Go *shake your ears*" (i. e., "good riddance to you").

OCT. You may do your will:  
But he's a tried and valiant soldier.

ANT. So is my horse, Octavius, and for that  
I do appoint him store of provender:  
It is a creature that I teach to fight,  
To wind, to stop, to run directly on,  
His corporal motion govern'd by my spirit.  
And, in some taste, is Lepidus but so;  
He must be taught, and train'd, and bid go forth;  
A barren-spirited fellow; one that feeds  
On abjects, orts and imitations,  
Which, out of use and staled by other men,  
Begin his fashion: do not talk of him  
But as a property. And now, Octavius,

30

40

32 *wind . . . directly on*] turn . . . straight on.

34 *in some taste*] in some slight degree.

37 *abjects, orts*] Thus the Cambridge editors. The Folios read *Obiects, Arts*. Theobald substituted *abject orts*, i. e., things flung away as useless, rejected scraps, refuse. For "orts" in this sense, cf. *Lucrece*, 985: "a beggar's orts." There is no authority for "abjects" as used in the present text; that word is applied to forlorn and forsaken persons (cf. *Rich. III*, I, i, 106: "We are the queen's *abjects*," and *Psalms*, xxxv, 15: "the *abjects* gathered themselves together"), but nowhere is it used of things. Some retain the Folio reading and explain "Objects" as contemptible or hideous things, and "Arts" as "fantastic tricks." These are possible, but far-fetched meanings of the words. Theobald's change on the whole merits acceptance. "Imitations" means "mere echoes or shadows of the genuine thing."

38 *staled*] worn out, rendered obsolete.

39 *Begin his fashion*] Form the starting-point of fashion for him. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, III, ii, 307: Falstaff says of Shallow that he "came ever in the rearward of the fashion."

40 *a property*] a theatrical property, a mere tool.

Listen great things: Brutus and Cassius  
 Are levying powers: we must straight make head:  
 Therefore let our alliance be combined,  
 Our best friends made, our means stretch'd;  
 And let us presently go sit in council,  
 How covert matters may be best disclosed,  
 And open perils surest answered.

OCT. Let us do so: for we are at the stake,  
 And bay'd about with many enemies;  
 And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear, 50  
 Millions of mischiefs. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE II — CAMP NEAR SARDIS

## BEFORE BRUTUS'S TENT

*Drum.* Enter BRUTUS, LUCILIUS, LUCIUS, and Soldiers; TITINIUS  
 and PINDARUS meet them

BRU. Stand, ho!

LUCIL. Give the word, ho! and stand.

BRU. What now, Lucilius! is Cassius near?

LUCIL. He is at hand; and Pindarus is come  
 To do you salutation from his master.

BRU. He greets me well. Your master, Pindarus,  
 In his own change, or by ill officers,

42 *make head*] raise an army.

48-49 *at the stake, And bay'd about*] like a bear tied to a stake in the sport  
 of bear-baiting, and barked at by a pack of dogs.

1 *Stand, ho*] As a matter of history a year intervenes between the events of  
 this and the preceding scene.

7 *In his own change . . . officers*] Because of some change of mind on his  
 own part or failure of duty on the part of his officers.

Hath given me some worthy cause to wish  
Things done undone: but if he be at hand,  
I shall be satisfied.

PIN.

I do not doubt

10

But that my noble master will appear  
Such as he is, full of regard and honour.

BRU. He is not doubted. A word, Lucilius,  
How he received you: let me be resolved.

LUCIL. With courtesy and with respect enough;  
But not with such familiar instances,  
Nor with such free and friendly conference,  
As he hath used of old.

BRU.

Thou hast described

A hot friend cooling: ever note, Lucilius,  
When love begins to sicken and decay,  
It useth an enforced ceremony.

20

There are no tricks in plain and simple faith:  
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,  
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;  
But when they should endure the bloody spur,  
They fall their crests and like deceitful jades  
Sink in the trial. Comes his army on?

LUCIL. They mean this night in Sardis to be  
quarter'd;

---

16 *familiar instances*] marks of familiarity.

23 *hollow men . . . hot at hand*] insincere men, like impetuous horses  
under restraint of the rein.

26 *fall their crests*] let fall, lower, their crests; a sign of want of spirit in a  
horse.

*deceitful jades*] horses not to be trusted. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, I, ii, 245:  
"he'll prove a jade."



The greater part, the horse in general,  
Are come with Cassius. *[Low march within.]*

BRU. Hark! he is arrived: 30  
March gently on to meet him.

*Enter CASSIUS and his powers*

CAS. Stand, ho!

BRU. Stand, ho! Speak the word along.

FIRST SOL. Stand!

SEC. SOL. Stand!

THIRD SOL. Stand!

CAS. Most noble brother, you have done me  
wrong.

BRU. Judge me, you gods! wrong I mine enemies?  
And, if not so, how should I wrong a brother?

CAS. Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs; 40  
And when you do them —

BRU. Cassius, be content;  
Speak your griefs softly: I do know you well.  
Before the eyes of both our armies here,  
Which should perceive nothing but love from us,  
Let us not wrangle: bid them move away;  
Then in my tent, Cassius, enlarge your griefs,  
And I will give you audience.

CAS. Pindarus,  
Bid our commanders lead their charges off  
A little from this ground.

---

42 *griefs*] grievances.

46 *enlarge your griefs*] set out in full your grievances.

48 *their charges*] the troops under their command.

'BRU. Lucilius, do you the like, and let no man 50  
Come to our tent till we have done our conference.  
Let Lucius and Titinius guard our door. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III — BRUTUS'S TENT

*Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS*

CAS. That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this :  
You have condemn'd and noted Lucius Pella  
For taking bribes here of the Sardians ;  
Wherein my letters, praying on his side,  
Because I knew the man, were slighted off.

BRU. You wrong'd yourself to write in such a case.

CAS. In such a time as this it is not meet  
That every nice offence should bear his comment.

BRU. Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself 10  
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm,  
To sell and mart your offices for gold  
To undeservers.

CAS. I an itching palm !

50-52 *Lucilius . . . Lucius*] Thus the Folio. But Craik was doubtless right in transposing these names. Thereby he regularised the metre of the first line, and appointed functions for Lucilius and Lucius, which alone harmonise with the coming scene. From IV, iii, 125, *infra*, it is clear that Lucilius not Lucius is guarding the door, an office which better befits an adult soldier of rank than a page-boy like Lucius. Moreover Titinius is one of Brutus's trusted officers, with whom it is very improbable that the page-boy would be associated in an important duty.

2 *noted*] disgraced, stigmatised.

5 *slighted off*] disregarded.

8 *every nice . . . comment*] every petty offence should be scrutinised.

You know that you are Brutus that speaks this,  
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.

*BRU. The name of Cassius honours this corrup-  
tion,*

And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.

CAS. Chastisement!

BRU. Remember March, the ides of March re-  
member:

Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?  
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,  
And not for justice? What, shall one of us,  
That struck the foremost man of all this world  
But for supporting robbers, shall we now  
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,  
And sell the mighty space of our large honours  
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?  
I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,  
Than such a Roman.

20

CAS. Brutus, bait not me;  
I'll not endure it: you forget yourself,  
To hedge me in; I am a soldier, I,  
Older in practice, abler than yourself  
To make conditions.

30

BRU. Go to; you are not, Cassius.

CAS. I am.

BRU. I say you are not.

---

28 *bait*] Thus the Folios. Theobald unnecessarily substituted *bay*.

30 *To hedge me in*] To limit my authority.

32 *To make conditions*] To decide the terms on which offices are to be conferred.

CAS. Urge me no more, I shall forget myself;  
Have mind upon your health, tempt me no farther.

BRU. Away, slight man!

CAS. Is't possible?

BRU. Hear me, for I will speak.  
Must I give way and room to your rash choler?  
Shall I be frightened when a madman stares?

40

CAS. O ye gods, ye gods! must I endure all this?

BRU. All this! ay, more: fret till your proud heart  
break;

Go show your slaves how choleric you are,  
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge?  
Must I observe you? must I stand and crouch  
Under your testy humour? By the gods,  
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,  
Though it do split you; for, from this day forth,  
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,  
When you are waspish.

CAS. Is it come to this?

50

BRU. You say you are a better soldier:  
Let it appear so; make your vaunting true,  
And it shall please me well: for mine own part,  
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.

CAS. You wrong me every way; you wrong me,  
Brutus;

I said, an elder soldier, not a better:  
Did I say, better?

---

35 *Urge*] Worry, exasperate.

37 *slight*] insignificant, as in IV, i, 12, *supra*: "*slight unmeritable man*."

44 *budge*] give place to you.

45 *observe you*] be obsequious to you, defer to you.

BRU. If you did, I care not.

CAS. When Cæsar lived, he durst not thus have moved me.

BRU. Peace, peace! you durst not so have tempted him.

CAS. I durst not!

60

BRU. No.

CAS. What, durst not tempt him!

BRU. For your life you durst not.

CAS. Do not presume too much upon my love;  
I may do that I shall be sorry for.

BRU. You have done that you should be sorry for.

There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats;

For I am arm'd so strong in honesty,

That they pass by me as the idle wind

Which I respect not. I did send to you

For certain sums of gold, which you denied me:

70

For I can raise no money by vile means:

By heaven, I had rather coin my heart,

And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring

From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash

By any indirection. I did send

To you for gold to pay my legions,

Which you denied me: was that done like Cassius?

Should I have answer'd Caius Cassius so?

When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous,

To lock such rascal counters from his friends,

80

73 *drachmas*] See note on III, ii, 243, *supra*.

75 *indirection*] dishonesty.

80 *To lock such rascal counters*] As to withhold such worthless pieces of money.

Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts,  
Dash him to pieces !

CAS. I denied you not.

BRU. You did.

CAS. I did not: he was but a fool  
That brought my answer back. Brutus hath rived my  
heart:

A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,  
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

BRU. I do not, till you practise them on me.

CAS. You love me not.

BRU. I do not like your faults.

CAS. A friendly eye could never see such faults.

BRU. A flatterer's would not, though they do appear 90  
As huge as high Olympus.

CAS. Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,  
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,  
For Cassius is aweary of the world;  
Hated by one he loves; braved by his brother;  
Check'd like a bondman; all his faults observed,  
Set in a note-book, learn'd and conn'd by rote,  
To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep  
My spirit from mine eyes! There is my dagger,  
And here my naked breast; within, a heart 100  
Dearer than Plutus' mine, richer than gold:  
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth;

---

101 *Plutus*] Pope's correction of the Folio reading *Pluto's*. Cf. *Tim. of Athens*, I, i, 278: "*Plutus*, the god of gold."

102 *If . . . take it forth*] Cf. 185, *infra*: "Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true."

I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart:  
Strike, as thou didst at Cæsar; for I know,  
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him  
better  
Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.

BRU. Sheathe your dagger:  
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope;  
Do what you will, dishonour shall be humour.  
O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb,  
That carries anger as the flint bears fire, 110  
Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark  
And straight is cold again.

CAS. Hath Cassius lived  
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus,  
When grief and blood ill-temper'd vexeth him?

BRU. When I spoke that, I was ill-temper'd too.

CAS. Do you confess so much? Give me your  
hand.

BRU. And my heart too.

CAS. O Brutus!

BRU. What's the matter?

CAS. Have not you love enough to bear with me,  
When that rash humour which my mother gave me  
Makes me forgetful?

BRU. Yes, Cassius, and from henceforth,  
When you are over-earnest with your Brutus, 121  
He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

POET. [*Within.*] Let me go in to see the generals;

---

108 *Do . . . humour*] Whatever dishonourable thing you may do, I will  
set it down to the whim or caprice of the moment.

There is some grudge between 'em; 't is not meet  
They be alone.

LUCIL. [*Within.*] You shall not come to them.

POET. [*Within.*] Nothing but death shall stay me.

*Enter Poet, followed by LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, and LUCIUS*

CAS. How now! what's the matter?

POET. For shame, you generals! what do you mean?  
Love, and be friends, as two such men should be;  
For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye. 130

CAS. Ha, ha! how vilely doth this cynic rhyme!

BRU. Get you hence, sirrah; saucy fellow, hence!

CAS. Bear with him, Brutus; 't is his fashion.

BRU. I'll know his humour when he knows his  
time:

What should the wars do with these jiggling fools?  
Companion, hence!

CAS. Away, away, be gone! [*Exit Poet.*]

BRU. Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders  
Prepare to lodge their companies to-night.

CAS. And come yourselves, and bring Messala with  
you

Immediately to us. [*Exeunt Lucilius and Titinius.*]

129-130 *Love, and be friends, . . . than ye*] This distich comes with little change direct from Plutarch, who mentions that it is what "old Nestor said in Homer." Plutarch makes the intruder a "hot, hasty man," named Phaonius, who professed extravagant devotion to the cynic philosophy.

131 *this cynic*] according to Plutarch, Brutus called the intruder "dog and counterfeit cynic."

135 *jiggling*] often used of doggerel rhyming, as well as of dancing.

136 *Companion*] Fellow. The word was often used contemptuously.



BRU. Lucius, a bowl of wine! [*Exit Lucius.*]

CAS. I did not think you could have been so angry. 141

BRU. O Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.

CAS. Of your philosophy you make no use,  
If you give place to accidental evils.

BRU. No man bears sorrow better: Portia is dead.

CAS. Ha! Portia!

BRU. She is dead.

CAS. How 'scaped I killing when I cross'd you so?  
O insupportable and touching loss!

Upon what sickness?

BRU. Impatient of my absence, 150  
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony  
Have made themselves so strong: for with her death  
That tidings came: with this she fell distract,  
And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire.

CAS. And died so?

BRU. Even so.

CAS. O ye immortal gods!

*Re-enter LUCIUS, with wine and taper*

BRU. Speak no more of her. Give me a bowl of  
wine.

In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius. [*Drinks.*]

CAS. My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.  
Fill, Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup; 159  
I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love. [*Drinks.*]

BRU. Come in, Titinius! [*Exit Lucius.*]

---

154 *swallow'd fire*] According to Plutarch, Portia put hot burning coals  
in her mouth, and then kept her lips closed till she choked.

*Re-enter* TITINIUS, *with* MESSALA

Welcome, good Messala.

Now sit we close about this taper here,  
And call in question our necessities.

CAS. Portia, art thou gone?

BRU. No more, I pray you.

Messala, I have here received letters,  
That young Octavius and Mark Antony  
Come down upon us with a mighty power,  
Bending their expedition toward Philippi.

MES. Myself have letters of the selfsame tenour.

BRU. With what addition?

170

MES. That by proscription and bills of outlawry  
Octavius, Antony and Lepidus,  
Have put to death an hundred senators.

BRU. Therein our letters do not well agree;  
Mine speak of seventy senators that died  
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.

CAS. Cicero one!

MES. Cicero is dead,  
And by that order of proscription.  
Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?

BRU. No, Messala.

180

MES. Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?

BRU. Nothing, Messala.

MES. That, methinks, is strange.

BRU. Why ask you? hear you ought of her in yours?

MES. No, my lord.

BRU. Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.

MES. Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell:  
For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

BRU. Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala:  
With meditating that she must die once  
I have the patience to endure it now. 190

MES. Even so great men great losses should endure.

CAS. I have as much of this in art as you,  
But yet my nature could not bear it so.

BRU. Well, to our work alive. What do you think  
Of marching to Philippi presently?

CAS. I do not think it good.

BRU. Your reason?

CAS. This it is:

'T is better that the enemy seek us:  
So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers,  
Doing himself offence; whilst we lying still  
Are full of rest, defence and nimbleness. 200

BRU. Good reasons must of force give place to better.  
The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground  
Do stand but in a forced affection,  
For they have grudged us contribution:  
The enemy, marching along by them,  
By them shall make a fuller number up,  
Come on refresh'd, new-added and encouraged;  
From which advantage shall we cut him off  
If at Philippi we do face him there,  
These people at our back.

192 *in art*] in theory.

199 *offence*] harm, injury.

207 *new-added*] re-inforced. Capell first hyphenated the words.

CAS. Hear me, good brother. 210

BRU. Under your pardon. You must note beside  
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,  
Our legions are brim-full, our cause is ripe:  
The enemy increaseth every day;  
We, at the height, are ready to decline.  
There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat, 220  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.

CAS. Then, with your will, go on;  
We'll along ourselves and meet them at Philippi.

BRU. The deep of night is crept upon our talk,  
And nature must obey necessity;  
Which we will niggard with a little rest.  
There is no more to say?

CAS. No more. Good-night:  
Early to-morrow will we rise and hence.

BRU. Lucius! [*Re-enter Lucius.*] My gown. [*Exit Lucius.*]  
Farewell, good Messala:

Good night, Titinius: noble, noble Cassius, 230  
Good night, and good repose.

CAS. O my dear brother!  
This was an ill beginning of the night:

218 *Omitted*] Neglected.

226 *niggard*] satisfy sparingly. The word is used both as a transitive and an intransitive verb. Cf. *Sonnet* i, 12: "makest waste in *niggard-ing* (*i. e.*, playing the miser)."

Never come such division 'tween our souls !

Let it not, Brutus.

BRU. Every thing is well.

CAS. Good night, my lord.

BRU. Good night, good brother.

TIT. MES. Good night, Lord Brutus.

BRU. Farewell, every one.  
[*Exeunt all but Brutus.*]

*Re-enter LUCIUS, with the gown*

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument ?

LUC. Here in the tent.

BRU. What, thou speak'st drowsily ?

Poor knave, I blame thee not ; thou art o'er-watch'd.

Call Claudius and some other of my men ; 240

I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

LUC. Varro and Claudius !

*Enter VARRO and CLAUDIUS*

VAR. Calls my lord ?

BRU. I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep ;

It may be I shall raise you by and by

On business to my brother Cassius.

VAR. So please you, we will stand and watch your  
pleasure.

BRU. I will not have it so : lie down, good sirs ;

It may be I shall otherwise bethink me.

Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so ; 250

I put it in the pocket of my gown.

[*Var. and Clau. lie down.*]

---

239 *Poor knave*] Poor lad.

*o'er-watch'd*] wearied for want of sleep.

LUC. I was sure your lordship did not give it me.

BRU. Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful.  
Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,  
And touch thy instrument a strain or two?

LUC. Ay, my lord, an 't please you.

BRU. It does, my boy:  
I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.

LUC. It is my duty, sir.

BRU. I should not urge thy duty past thy might;  
I know young bloods look for a time of rest. 260

LUC. I have slept, my lord, already.

BRU. It was well done; and thou shalt sleep again;  
I will not hold thee long: if I do live,  
I will be good to thee. *[Music, and a song.]*

This is a sleepy tune. O murderous slumber,  
Lay'st thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,  
That plays thee music? Gentle knave, good night;  
I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee:  
If thou dost nod, thou break'st thy instrument;  
I'll take it from thee; and, good boy, good night. 270  
Let me see, let me see; is not the leaf turn'd down  
Where I left reading? Here it is, I think. *[Sits down.]*

*Enter the Ghost of CÆSAR*

How ill this taper burns! Ha! who comes here?  
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes  
That shapes this monstrous apparition.  
It comes upon me. Art thou any thing?  
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,

---

266 mace] sceptre.

That makest my blood cold, and my hair to stare?  
Speak to me what thou art.

GHOST. Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

BRU. Why comest thou? 280

GHOST. To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

BRU. Well; then I shall see thee again?

GHOST. Ay, at Philippi.

BRU. Why, I will see thee at Philippi then. [*Exit Ghost.*]  
Now I have taken heart thou vanishest.

Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.

Boy, Lucius! Varro! Claudius! Sirs awake!  
Claudius!

LUC. The strings, my lord, are false.

BRU. He thinks he still is at his instrument. 290

Lucius, awake!

LUC. My lord?

BRU. Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so criedst  
out?

LUC. My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

BRU. Yes, that thou didst: didst thou see any  
thing?

LUC. Nothing, my lord.

BRU. Sleep again, Lucius. Sirrah Claudius!

[*To Var.*] Fellow thou, awake!

VAR. My lord?

CLAU. My lord? 300

BRU. Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

278 *stare*] stand on end.

280 *Thy evil spirit*] In Plutarch the ghost is only described as "Brutus's evil spirit." Shakespeare first denominated the apparition "the ghost of Cæsar."

VAR. CLAU. Did we, my lord?

BRU. Ay: saw you any thing?

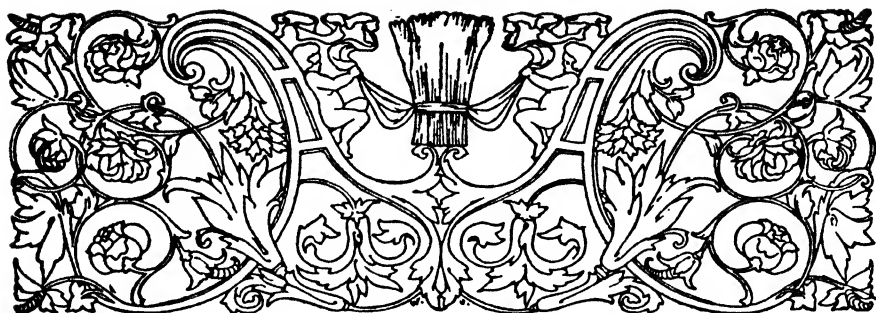
VAR. No, my lord, I saw nothing.

CLAU. Nor I, my lord.

BRU. Go and commend me to my brother Cassius;  
Bid him set on his powers betimes before,  
And we will follow.

VAR. CLAU. It shall be done, my lord. [*Exeunt.*]





ACT FIFTH — SCENE I  
THE PLAINS OF PHILIPPI

*Enter OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, and their army*

OCTAVIUS



OW, ANTONY, OUR HOPES  
are answered:  
You said the enemy would not  
come down,  
But keep the hills and upper  
regions;  
It proves not so: their battles  
are at hand;  
They mean to warn us at Philippi  
here,  
Answering before we do demand  
of them.

ANT. Tut, I am in their  
bosoms, and I know

Wherefore they do it: they could be content  
To visit other places; and come down

4 *battles*] battalions, forces, army. Cf. line 16, *infra*.

5 *warn us*] challenge us, summon us (to battle).

8 *content*] glad.

With fearful bravery, thinking by this face  
To fasten in our thoughts that they have courage;  
But 't is not so.

10

*Enter a Messenger*

MESS. Prepare you, generals:  
The enemy comes on in gallant show;  
Their bloody sign of battle is hung out,  
And something to be done immediately.

ANT. Octavius, lead your battle softly on,  
Upon the left hand of the even field.

OCT. Upon the right hand I; keep thou the left.

ANT. Why do you cross me in this exigent?

OCT. I do not cross you; but I will do so. [*March.* 20

*Drum. Enter BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and their Army; LUCILIUS,  
TITINIUS, MESSALA, and others*

BRU. They stand, and would have parley.

CAS. Stand fast, Titinius: we must out and talk.

OCT. Mark Antony, shall we give sign of battle?

ANT. No, Cæsar, we will answer on their charge.  
Make forth; the generals would have some words.

10 *fearful bravery*] timid show of courage.

14 *Their bloody sign . . . out*] According to Plutarch, the "signal of battle" in Brutus's and Cassius's camp was "an arming scarlet coat."

19 *exigent*] emergency.

20 *I do not . . . do so*] I have no wish to thwart you, but I will have my way. The youthful Octavius shows here a petulant obstinacy, which throws dramatic light on his character. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, II, ii, 15 *seq.*

24 *answer on their charge*] meet them when they charge.

OCT. Stir not until the signal.

BRU. Words before blows: is it so, countrymen?

OCT. Not that we love words better, as you do.

BRU. Good words are better than bad strokes,  
Octavius.

ANT. In your bad strokes, Brutus, you give good  
words:

30

Witness the hole you made in Cæsar's heart,  
Crying "Long live! hail, Cæsar!"

CAS. Antony,  
The posture of your blows are yet unknown;  
But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees,  
And leave them honeyless.

ANT. Not stingless too.

BRU. O, yes, and soundless too;  
For you have stol'n their buzzing, Antony,  
And very wisely threat before you sting.

ANT. Villains, you did not so, when your vile dag-  
gers

Hack'd one another in the sides of Cæsar: 40  
You show'd your teeth like apes, and fawn'd like hounds,  
And bow'd like bondmen, kissing Cæsar's feet;  
Whilst damned Casca, like a cur, behind  
Struck Cæsar on the neck. O you flatterers!

CAS. Flatterers! Now, Brutus, thank yourself:

33 *The posture . . . unknown*] The manner or management of your attack we do not yet know. The plural verb "are" results from the proximity of "blows," although the singular "posture" is the subject.

34 *the Hybla bees*] Hybla was a town in Sicily celebrated by classical poets for the sweetness of its honey. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, I, ii, 40: "a most sweet wench. . . . As the honey of Hybla."

This tongue had not offended so to-day,  
If Cassius might have ruled.

OCT. Come, come, the cause: if arguing make us  
sweat,

The proof of it will turn to redder drops.

Look;

50

I draw a sword against conspirators;

When think you that the sword goes up again?

Never, till Cæsar's three and thirty wounds

Be well avenged, or till another Cæsar

Have added slaughter to the sword of traitors.

BRU. Cæsar, thou canst not die by traitors' hands,  
Unless thou bring'st them with thee.

OCT.

So I hope;

I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.

BRU. O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,  
Young man, thou couldst not die more honourable.

60

CAS. A peevish schoolboy, worthless of such honour,  
Join'd with a masker and a reveller!

ANT. Old Cassius still!

OCT.

Come, Antony; away!

Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth;

If you dare fight to-day, come to the field:

If not, when you have stomachs.

*[Exeunt Octavius, Antony, and their army.]*

53 *three and thirty wounds*] the number of Cæsar's wounds were "three  
and twenty" according to classical historians.

54-55 *till another . . . traitors*] till a second Cæsar (*i. e.*, myself) has  
supplied the sword of you traitors with an additional victim; till you  
have killed me as you have killed Julius Cæsar.

63 *Old Cassius still*] Cassius is unchanged, as bitter tongued as ever.

66 *stomachs*] inclination.

CAS. Why, now, blow wind, swell billow, and swim  
bark!

The storm is up, and all is on the hazard.

BRU. Ho, Lucilius! hark, a word with you.

LUCIL. [Standing forth] My lord?

[Brutus and Lucilius converse apart.]

CAS. Messala!

MES. [Standing forth] What says my general?

CAS. Messala, 70

This is my birth-day; as this very day  
Was Cassius born. Give me thy hand, Messala:  
Be thou my witness that, against my will,  
As Pompey was, am I compell'd to set  
Upon one battle all our liberties.  
You know that I held Epicurus strong,  
And his opinion: now I change my mind,  
And partly credit things that do presage.  
Coming from Sardis, on our former ensign  
Two mighty eagles fell, and there they perch'd, 80  
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers' hands;  
Who to Philippi here consorted us:

71 *as this very day*] on this very day as is; "as" gave emphatic precision to dates.

72-125 *Give me thy hand . . . Come, ho! away!*] Throughout this passage Shakespeare follows with great closeness the language of North's translation of Plutarch.

76-77 *Epicurus . . . And his opinion*] As an Epicurean, Cassius had discredited reliance on omens, faith in which was strongly held by the opposing sect of the Stoics.

79 *our former ensign*] our foremost ensign. North in the corresponding passage has "two of the *foremost* ensigns."

82 *to Philippi . . . us*] accompanied us to Philippi.

This morning are they fled away and gone;  
 And in their steads do ravens, crows and kites  
 Fly o'er our heads and downward look on us,  
 As we were sickly prey: their shadows seem  
 A canopy most fatal, under which  
 Our army lies, ready to give up the ghost.

MES Believe not so.

CAS. I but believe it partly,  
 For I am fresh of spirit and resolved  
 To meet all perils very constantly.

90

BRU. Even so, Lucilius.

CAS. Now, most noble Brutus,  
 The gods to-day stand friendly, that we may,  
 Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age!  
 But, since the affairs of men rest still incertain,  
 Let's reason with the worst that may befall.  
 If we do lose this battle, then is this  
 The very last time we shall speak together:  
 What are you then determined to do?

BRU. Even by the rule of that philosophy  
 By which I did blame Cato for the death  
 Which he did give himself: I know not how,

100

94 *Lovers*] Friends. Cf. III, ii, 13, 44, *supra*.

96 *reason with*] talk of.

101 *Cato*] The Stoic philosopher, who loyally supported Pompey. After the defeat by Cæsar of Pompey's friends at the battle of Thapsus, B. C. 46, Cato committed suicide at Utica, in Africa, spending the preceding night in reading Plato's *Phædo*. Portia, Brutus's wife, was his daughter (cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, i, 166).

102 *Which he did give himself: I know not how*] The punctuation here and in the lines which follow is open to discussion. The Folios put a comma after *himself*, and a colon after *how*, making *I know not how*

But I do find it cowardly and vile,  
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent  
The time of life: arming myself with patience  
To stay the providence of some high powers  
That govern us below.

CAS. Then, if we lose this battle,  
You are contented to be led in triumph  
Thorough the streets of Rome?

BRU. No, Cassius, no: think not, thou noble Roman,  
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome; 111  
He bears too great a mind. But this same day  
Must end that work the ides of March begun;  
And whether we shall meet again I know not.  
Therefore our everlasting farewell take.  
For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius!  
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;  
If not, why then this parting was well made.

CAS. For ever and for ever farewell, Brutus!

---

qualify Brutus's reference to Cato's death, and express uncertainty as to its precise mode. The punctuation in the text is supported by the text of North, where Brutus is made to say "I trust (*I know not how*) a certain rule of philosophy, by the which I did greatly blame and reprove Cato for killing himself . . . but being now in the midst of the danger, I am of a contrary mind."

110-115 *prevent The time of life*] anticipate the normal close of life.

115 *arming myself*] rather would I arm myself.

116 *stay*] await.

110-112 *No, Cassius . . . mind*] Brutus's thought of his inability to escape from disgrace leads him to retract suddenly his declaration against suicide. So, in Plutarch, Brutus, after admitting his disapproval of Cato's act, remarks that if the coming battle be lost he will be quite content to kill himself.

If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed; 120  
 If not, 't is true this parting was well made.

BRU. Why then, lead on. O, that a man might know  
 The end of this day's business ere it come!  
 But it sufficeth that the day will end,  
 And then the end is known. Come, ho! away!  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II — THE FIELD OF BATTLE

*Alarum. Enter BRUTUS and MESSALA*

BRU. Ride, ride, Messala, ride, and give these bills  
 Unto the legions on the other side: [*Loud alarum.*]  
 Let them set on at once; for I perceive  
 But cold demeanour in Octavius' wing,  
 And sudden push gives them the overthrow.  
 Ride, ride, Messala: let them all come down. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Alarums. Enter CASSIUS and TITINIUS*

CAS. O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!  
 Myself have to mine own turn'd enemy:  
 This ensign here of mine was turning back;  
 I slew the coward, and did take it from him.

---

1-2 *bills Unto . . . side*] orders to the legions in reserve on the left wing  
 of the army to advance to the aid of Cassius who was in command  
 of the left wing (cf. *infra*, V, iii, 10 *seq.*).

3-4 *ensign . . . it*] standard-bearer . . . the standard.



TIT. O Cassius, Brutus gave the word too early;  
Who, having some advantage on Octavius,  
Took it too eagerly: his soldiers fell to spoil,  
Whilst we by Antony are all enclosed.

*Enter PINDARUS*

PIN. Fly further off, my lord, fly further off;  
Mark Antony is in your tents, my lord: 10  
Fly, therefore, noble Cassius, fly far off.

CAS. This hill is far enough. Look, look, Titinius;  
Are those my tents where I perceive the fire?

TIT. They are, my lord.

CAS. Titinius, if thou lovest me,  
Mount thou my horse and hide thy spurs in him,  
Till he have brought thee up to yonder troops  
And here again; that I may rest assured  
Whether yond troops are friend or enemy.

TIT. I will be here again, even with a thought. [*Exit.*

CAS. Go, Pindarus, get higher on that hill; 20  
My sight was ever thick; regard Titinius,  
And tell me what thou notest about the field.

*[Pindarus ascends the hill.]*

This day I breathed first: time is come round,  
And where I did begin, there shall I end;  
My life is run his compass. Sirrah, what news?

---

16 *yonder troops*] the troops which, in the previous scene (ii, *supra*),  
Brutus has ordered Messala to bring to Cassius' aid.

19 *even with a thought*] quick as thought. The same phrase is found in  
*Ant. and Cleop.*, IV, xiv, 9.

20 *get higher on that hill*] go higher up the hill. Cassius and Pindarus  
have already reached the hill, as line 12, *supra*, indicates.

PIN. [*Above*] O my lord!

CAS. What news?

PIN. [*Above*] Titinius is enclosed round about  
With horsemen, that make to him on the spur;  
Yet he spurs on. Now they are almost on him. 30  
Now, Titinius! Now some light. O, he lights too.  
He's ta'en. [*Shout*] And, hark! they shout for joy.

CAS. Come down; behold no more.  
O, coward that I am, to live so long,  
To see my best friend ta'er before my face!

PINDARUS *descends*

Come hither, sirrah:  
In Parthia did I take thee prisoner;  
And then I swore thee, saving of thy life,  
That whatsoever I did bid thee do,  
Thou shouldst attempt it. Come now, keep thine oath; 40  
Now be a freeman; and with this good sword,  
That ran through Cæsar's bowels, search this bosom.  
Stand not to answer: here, take thou the hilts;  
And when my face is covered, as 't is now,  
Guide thou the sword. [*Pindarus stabs him.*] Cæsar, thou  
art revenged,  
Even with this sword that kill'd thee. [*Dies.*]

PIN. So, I am free; yet would not so have been,  
Durst I have done my will. O Cassius!  
Far from this country Pindarus shall run,  
Where never Roman shall take note of him. [*Exit.* 50]

---

31 *some light* . . . *he lights*] some of them alight, dismount . . . he alights.

43 *the hilts*] the handle of the sword; the plural form was in common use.

*Re-enter* TITINIUS *with* MESSALA

MES. It is but change, Titinius; for Octavius  
Is overthrown by noble Brutus' power,  
As Cassius' legions are by Antony.

TIT. These tidings will well comfort Cassius.

MES. Where did you leave him?

TIT. All disconsolate,  
With Pindarus his bondman, on this hill.

MES. Is not that he that lies upon the ground?

TIT. He lies not like the living. O my heart!

MES. Is not that he?

TIT. No, this was he, Messala,  
But Cassius is no more. O setting sun,  
As in thy red rays thou dost sink to night,  
So in his red blood Cassius' day is set,  
The sun of Rome is set! Our day is gone;  
Clouds, dews and dangers come; our deeds are done!  
Mistrust of my success hath done this deed. 60

MES. Mistrust of good success hath done this deed.  
O hateful error, melancholy's child,  
Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men  
The things that are not? O error, soon conceived,  
Thou never comest unto a happy birth,  
But kill'st the mother that engender'd thee! 70

TIT. What, Pindarus! where art thou, Pindarus?

MES. Seek him, Titinius, whilst I go to meet

51 *It is but change*] There is only an exchange of fortune.

58 *He lies not . . . living*] His posture is not that of a living man.

65 *my success*] the result of my effort.

66 *good success*] a favourable issue.

68 *apt thoughts*] impressionable minds.

The noble Brutus, thrusting this report  
 Into his ears: I may say "thrusting" it,  
 For piercing steel and darts envenomed  
 Shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus  
 As tidings of this sight.

TRI. Hie you, Messala,  
 And I will seek for Pingarus the while. [*Exit Messala.*  
 Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius? 80  
 Did I not meet thy friends? and did not they  
 Put on my brows this wreath of victory,  
 And bid me give it thee? Didst thou not hear their  
 shouts?

Alas, thou hast misconstrued every thing!  
 But, hold thee, take this garland on thy brow;  
 Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I  
 Will do his bidding. Brutus, come apace,  
 And see how I regarded Caius Cassius.  
 By your leave, gods: this is a Roman's part:  
 Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart. 90  
 [*Kills himself.*]

*Alarum. Re-enter MESSALA, with BRUTUS, young CATO,  
 and others*

BRU. Where, where, Messala, doth his body lie?

MES. Lo, yonder, and Titinius mourning it.

BRU. Titinius' face is upward.

CATO. He is slain.

BRU. O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!  
 Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords  
 In our own proper entrails. [*Low alarums.*]

96 *own proper*] very own; an emphatic duplication.

CATO. Brave Titinius!  
 Look, whether he have not crown'd dead Cassius!  
 BRU. Are yet two Romans living such as these?  
 The last of all the Romans, fare thee well!  
 It is impossible that ever Rome 100  
 Should breed thy fellow. Friends, I owe moe tears  
 To this dead man than you shall see me pay.  
 I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time.  
 Come therefore, and to Thasos send his body:  
 His funerals shall not be in our camp,  
 Lest it discomfort us. Lucilius, come,  
 And come, young Cato: let us to the field.  
 Labeo and Flavius, set our battles on.  
 'T is three o'clock; and, Romans, yet ere night  
 We shall try fortune in a second fight. [Exeunt. 110

## SCENE IV — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Alarum. Enter, fighting, Soldiers of both armies; then BRUTUS, young CATO, LUCILIUS, and others*

BRU. Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!

CATO. What bastard doth not? Who will go with me?

104 *Thasos*] an island in the Ægean Sea, not far from the battlefield of Philippi, on the mainland of Macedonia.

106 *discomfort*] discourage.

108 *set our battles on*] advance our army.

110 *second fight*] As a matter of history, the second engagement was separated by twenty days from the first. Shakespeare makes them both take place on the same day.

2 *What bastard doth not*] What man is such a dastard as not to do so.

I will proclaim my name about the field.  
I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!  
A foe to tyrants, and my country's friend;  
I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!

BRU. And I am Brutus, Marcus Brutus, I;  
Brutus, my country's friend; know me for Brutus! [*Exit.*]

LUCIL. O young and noble Cato, art thou down?  
Why, now thou diest as bravely as Titinius, 10  
And mayst be honour'd, being Cato's son.

FIRST SOLD. Yield, or thou diest.

LUCIL. Only I yield to die:  
[*Offering money*] There is so much that thou wilt kill me  
straight;

Kill Brutus, and be honour'd in his death.

FIRST SOLD. We must not. A noble prisoner!

SEC. SOLD. Room, ho! Tell Antony, Brutus is ta'en.

FIRST SOLD. I'll tell the news. Here comes the  
general.

*Enter ANTONY*

Brutus is ta'en, Brutus is ta'en, my lord.

ANT. Where is he?

LUCIL. Safe, Antony; Brutus is safe enough: 20  
I dare assure thee that no enemy  
Shall ever take alive the noble Brutus:  
The gods defend him from so great a shame!  
When you do find him, or alive or dead,  
He will be found like Brutus, like himself.

ANT. This is not Brutus, friend, but, I assure you,  
A prize no less in worth: keep this man safe,  
Give him all kindness: I had rather have

Such men my friends than enemies. Go on,  
And see whether Brutus be alive or dead, 30  
And bring us word unto Octavius' tent  
How every thing is chanced. [Exeunt.

## SCENE V — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter BRUTUS, DARDANIUS, CLITUS, STRATO, and VOLUMNIUS*

BRU. Come, poor remains of friends, rest on this  
rock.

CLI. Statilius show'd the torch-light, but, my lord,  
He came not back: he is or ta'en or slain.

BRU. Sit thee down, Clitus: slaying is the word;  
It is a deed in fashion. Hark thee, Clitus. [*Whispering.*

CLI. What, I, my lord? No, not for all the world.

BRU. Peace then, no words.

CLI. I'll rather kill myself.

BRU. Hark thee, Dardanius. [*Whispering.*

DAR. Shall I do such a deed?

CLI. O Dardanius!

DAR. O Clitus! 10

CLI. What ill request did Brutus make to thee?

DAR. To kill him, Clitus. Look, he meditates.

CLI. Now is that noble vessel full of grief,  
That it runs over even at his eyes.

BRU. Come hither, good Volumnius; list a word.

VOL. What says my lord?

BRU. Why, this, Volumnius:  
The ghost of Cæsar hath appear'd to me  
Two several times by night; at Sardis once,

And this last night here in Philippi fields:  
I know my hour is come.

VOL.

*Not so, my lord.*

20

BRU. Nay, I am sure it is, Volumnius.  
Thou seest the world, Volumnius, how it goes;  
Our enemies have beat us to the pit: [*Low alarums.*]  
It is more worthy to leap in ourselves  
Than tarry till they push us. Good Volumnius,  
Thou know'st that we two went to school together:  
Even for that our love of old, I prithee,  
Hold thou my sword-hilts, whilst I run on it.

VOL. That's not an office for a friend, my lord.

[*Alarum still.*]

CLI. Fly, fly, my lord; there is no tarrying here. 30

BRU. Farewell to you; and you; and you, Volum-  
nius.

Strato, thou hast been all this while asleep;  
Farewell to thee too, Strato. Countrymen,  
My heart doth joy that yet in all my life  
I found no man but he was true to me.

I shall have glory by this losing day,  
More than Octavius and Mark Antony  
By this vile conquest shall attain unto.  
So, fare you well at once; for Brutus' tongue  
Hath almost ended his life's history: 40

Night hangs upon mine eyes; my bones would  
rest,

That have but labour'd to attain this hour.

[*Alarum. Cry within, "Fly, fly, fly!"*]

---

23 *beat us to the pit*] beat us to the last ditch, destroyed us.



CLI. Fly, my lord, fly.

BRU.

Hence! I will follow.

*[Exeunt Clitus, Dardanius, and Volumnius.]*

I prithee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord:

Thou art a fellow of a good respect;

Thy life hath had some smatch of honour in it:

Hold then my sword, and turn away thy face,

While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato?

STRA. Give me your hand first: fare you well, my lord.

BRU. Farewell, good Strato. *[Runs on his sword.]* Cæsar,  
now be still:

50

I kill'd not thee with half so good a will. *[Dies.]*

*Alarum. Retreat. Enter OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, MESSALA, LUCILIUS,  
and the army*

OCT. What man is that?

MES. My master's man. Strato, where is thy master?

STRA. Free from the bondage you are in, Messala:

The conquerors can but make a fire of him;

For Brutus only overcame himself,

And no man else hath honour by his death.

LUCIL. So Brutus should be found. I thank thee,  
Brutus,

That thou hast proved Lucilius' saying true.

OCT. All that served Brutus, I will entertain them.

60

Fellow, wilt thou bestow thy time with me?

---

45 *good respect*] good reputation.

46 *smatch*] smack, tinge.

60 *entertain them*] take them into my service.

STRA. Ay, if Messala will prefer me to you.

OCT. Do so, good Messala.

MES. How died my master, Strato?

STRA. I held the sword, and he did run on it.

MES. Octavius, then take him to follow thee,  
That did the latest service to my master.

ANT. This was the noblest Roman of them all:

All the conspirators, save only he,

Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar;

70

He only, in a general honest thought

And common good to all, made one of them.

His life was gentle, and the elements

So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up

And say to all the world "This was a man!"

OCT. According to his virtue let us use him,  
With all respect and rites of burial.

Within my tent his bones to-night shall lie,

Most like a soldier, order'd honourably.

So call the field to rest, and let's away,

80

To part the glories of this happy day.

[*Exeunt.*]

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62 *prefer*] recommend; commonly used of masters recommending servants for service.

71-72 *in a general . . . to all*] out of an honest regard for the public good and for the general welfare.

81 *part*] divide, distribute.







# HAMLET

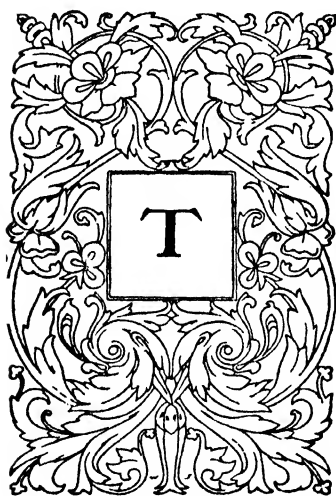
WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY GEORGE SANTAYANA  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY F. C. COWPER





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## INTRODUCTION



THE greater figures of fiction, as behooves things destined to last, have usually had an evolution and a history. Like the immortal gods, they have taken vague shape in the popular mind and in anonymous legends before receiving their most memorable form at the hands of some supreme poet. Perhaps no small part of Shakespeare's eminence is due to his having adopted plots and characters already current, already sanctioned by a certain proved vitality and power to charm. This conservatism is one of the many bonds by which art, when successful, clings to the life of the world and sucks in strength parasitically through its practical functions. Shakespeare's need of being a playwright before he was a poet, his concern to produce a popular play, won an



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audience for him in the beginning and still enables him to hold the boards. When creative genius neglects to ally itself in this way to some public interest it hardly gives birth to works of wide or perennial influence. Imagination needs a soil in history, tradition, or human institutions, else its random growths are not significant enough and, like trivial melodies, go immediately out of fashion. A great poem needs to be built up and remodelled on some given foundation with materials already at hand. Even in those fables which, like that of Don Quixote, may seem to be casual and original thoughts, we can usually detect a certain stage of experimentation with the idea, a certain novitiate and self-discovery on its part. The hero's character does not come out at first in its ultimate shape, but the shape it comes in, taking root and branching out in the mind into growths that had never been expected, becomes the germ of what is finally accepted and given out to the public. The true ideal of the most airy things is discoverable only by experimental methods, and there is nothing to which the approach is more blind and tentative than to the heart.

For this reason readers of Hamlet should not be surprised if this most psychological of tragedies should turn out to be a product of gradual accretions, or if its hero, most spontaneous and individual of characters, should be an afterthought and a discovery. Shakespeare followed a classic precept in this romantic drama: he allowed the plot to suggest the characters, and conceived their motives and psychological movement only as an underpinning and satiric deepening for their known actions. The

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play is an ordinary story with an extraordinary elaboration. Not only did Shakespeare, as his practice was, borrow an old plot, but he apparently worked over a first version of his own play and "enlarged it to almost as much again as it was." The personage of Hamlet, no less than the episodes of the piece, shows traces of this expansion. Some of Hamlet's actions and speeches seem anterior to his true character. They apparently remain over from the old melodrama and mark the points neglected by the poet and left untransmuted by his intuition.

These survivals of cruder methods, if survivals they be, give a touch of positive incoherence to Hamlet's character, otherwise sufficiently complex. His behaviour, for instance, before the praying King, and the reasons he gives there for sparing the villain, are apparently a remnant of bombast belonging to the old story, far more Christian and conventional in its motives than Shakespeare's is. So the grotesque bout with Laertes in Ophelia's grave is perhaps a bit of old rhodomontade left unexpunged. The disconcerting mixture of comic and ignoble elements in several crucial passages may be due to the same circumstance, as, for example, when Hamlet says of the Ghost, "Ah, ha, boy . . . Art there, truepenny? . . . You hear this fellow in the cellarage. . . . Old mole, canst work in the earth so fast?" or when he crowns the heart-rending closet scene with a bad pun: "Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you," as he draws out Polonius' body. These passages may contain remnants of that conventional farce which, as some think,

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was inherited by Elizabethan drama from the Middle Ages, when piety and obscenity, quaint simplicity and rant, could be jumbled together without offence. Yet this barbaric medley, surviving by chance or by inertia, is the occasion for the creation of a spirit that shall justify it, and shall express therein its own profound discord. The historical accidents that make these patches in the play are embodied and personified in a mind that can cover them all by its own complexity and dislocation. Each of these blots thus becomes a beauty, each of these accidents a piece of profound characterisation. In Hamlet's personality incoherent sentiments due, in a genetic sense, to the imperfect recasting of a grotesque old story, are made attributable ideally to his habit of acting out a mood irresponsibly and of giving a mock expression to every successive intuition. Thus his false rhetoric before the praying King becomes characteristic, and may be taken to betray an inveterate vacillation which seizes on verbal excuses and plays with unreal sentiments in order to put off the moment of action. So at Ophelia's grave he may be said to exhibit his ingrained histrionic habit, his incapacity to control the inner dialogue or dream in his own mind, which continually carries him into fits of speech and action, sometimes incongruous with one another but always ingenious and fetched from the depths of a distracted and tender heart. So, too, his sardonic humour and nonsensical verbiage at the most tragic junctures may justify themselves ideally and seem to be deeply inspired. These wild starts suggest a mind inwardly rent asunder, a delicate genius disordered, such

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as we now learn that Hamlet's was, a mind that with infinite sensibility possessed no mastery over itself nor over things. Thus the least digested elements in the fable come, by a happy turn, to constitute its profoundest suggestion.

The Middle Ages and the Renaissance into which they finally lurst had at once a decrepit and a juvenile character. They looked back with rather a doting and indiscriminate respect on the confused past, while at the same time they bubbled over with all manner of native mischief and fancy. In Gothic drama, as in Gothic architecture, we find bits of savage or classic antiquity, incongruities, afterthoughts, and accretions, old materials, precious or rude, built again into a new edifice. Yet these accepted and sanctified accidents make the charm and bewitching poetry of the work, for they have crystallised into a new style and a new structure; a historical junk-shop has become the temple of a new spirit. Its miscellaneous treasures, so heaped together, have acquired their own expression and pathos, and a certain unifying mystery has settled over the whole. The beauty and ideal import of a human work can thus come to resemble that of landscape or of a living body; it can be felt instinctively by a certain assimilation on the observer's part to the object's general movement, without any distinct discrimination of the elements involved.

Evidently the same thing happened to Shakespeare with his histrionic Prince that happened to Cervantes with his mad Knight: he fell in love with his hero. He caught in that figure, at first only grotesque and melo-

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dramatic, the suggestion of something noble, spiritual, and pathetic, and he devoted all his imaginative powers to developing that suggestion. He enriched the lines with all that reflection could furnish that was most pungent and poetical; he added the philosophic play of mind, gave free rein to soliloquy, insisted everywhere on what might seem keen and significant. At the same time he found pleasure in elaborating the story. He constructed, for instance, a young Hamlet, to stand behind the tragic hero, a witty, tender, and accomplished prince, to be overtaken by that cursed spite which he should prove incapable of turning aside. Here we have a piece of deliberate art. By numerous and well-chosen phrases scattered throughout the play, Shakespeare takes pains to evoke the image of a consummate and admirable nature, so that the charm and pathos of the tragedy which ruins it may be enhanced. In the young Hamlet we are asked to imagine the

“Unmatched form and feature of blown youth,”

“The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s, eye, tongue, sword;  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers!”

We learn of his proficiency in fencing, his fondness for the stage, and his competence as a critic of it; he is attached enough to the university to prefer it to the court. He can adopt for a moment the affectations of clever people, and be enough of a prig “to hold it base-ness to write fair”; but he writes fair, nevertheless.

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His "noble and most sovereign reason" pierces most things in the world, and among them philosophy (or, as we should say, science) of which he understands enough to see its limits. He knows how to humour and play with a fop no less than how to expose and transfix a flatterer, and he can be as contemptuous of foolish wordiness in a counsellor, as he can be courteous to sincerity in a humble artist. For comradeship he has a natural sense and is willing to drink deep with an old acquaintance; but for true intimacy he chooses the poor scholar and devoted friend, unworldly because capable of understanding the world, and shows in this choice his princely freedom and elevation of mind. And lest the last crown and flower of generous youth should be wanting, Hamlet is, of course, in love. Yet he is not without a more sober and settled affection than that expressed in his fancy for the fair Ophelia; his deepest sentiment is a great love and admiration for the King, his father. On this natural piety in the young Hamlet his new tragic life is to be grafted. By striking rudely in this quarter fate strikes not merely at his filial affection, but at his intellectual peace and at his confidence in justice. The wound is mortal and saps his moral being.

The hero, so conceived, is presented to us by the instrumentality of that same plot which had originally suggested his character. The beloved father dies suddenly, and to the son's natural grief at this loss is added the scandal of his mother's hasty second marriage. A heavy mood, filled with vague sinister suspicions, falls upon Hamlet. Presently, the supernatural comes upon

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the scene. Hamlet sees his father's ghost. He receives audible and explicit tidings of his mother's adultery and his father's murder.

We might say that to see—or if the spiritualistic reader prefers—to call up a ghost, is a first sign of Hamlet's moral dissolution. It would be easy to rationalise this part of the story, and explain the Ghost as a sort of symbol or allegory. Hamlet's character and situation were well conceived to base such a hallucination upon. His prophetic soul might easily have cheated him with such a counterfeit presentment of its own suspicions. But Shakespeare was evidently content to take the Ghost literally, and expected his audience naturally to do the same. Although not visible to the Queen on its final appearance, the Ghost is seen by Horatio and others on several occasions. The report it gives of its torments corresponds to the popular and orthodox conception of Purgatory, so that a Christian public might accept this ghost as a possible wanderer from the other world. Had Shakespeare cared much about ghosts, or wished to give, as in *Macbeth*, a realistic picture of the shabby supernatural, Hamlet's Ghost might well have been a much less theological and conventional being. It might have resembled somewhat more the shade of Achilles in the *Odyssey*, which is a beautiful idealisation of the spirits actually evoked by necromancy in all ages, which are echoes of former existences in this world, witless, fretful, sad, and unseizable. But such shades were little cultivated in Shakespeare's day. The Church had no need of them, and wished to preserve

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its ideal conception of the other world free from all empirical and pathological influences. Shakespeare's Ghost is accordingly wholly, though inconsistently, conventional. It is a Christian soul in Purgatory, which ought, in theological strictness, to be a holy and ideal essence, a phase of penitential and spiritual experience; yet this soul fears to scent the morning air, trembles at the cock-crow, and instigates the revenging of crime by crime. That is, it is no Christian soul, but a heathen and pathological spectre. It speaks, as Hamlet justly feels, by the ambiguous authority of hell and heaven at once. This hybrid personage, however, like the other anomalies in the play, comes to have its expressive value. It unites in a single image various threads of superstition actually tangled in the public mind. Ostensibly an emissary from the other world, such as would be admissible by a slightly heterodox Christian fancy, the Ghost is at the same time an echo of popular fable and demonology, and withal a moral and dramatic symbol, a definite *point d'appui* for the hero's morbid impulses. If Hamlet had not been likely to imagine a Ghost, Shakespeare would hardly have created one. There is affinity and emotional congruity in the various mysteries gathered together in this scene,—the night, the sea, the hidden crime, the hero's metaphysical melancholy, and the budding purpose in him to enact madness. Into this artful setting the Ghost falls naturally enough, and under the scenic spell of its presence we do not stop to ask which elements in that apparition are food for Hamlet's fancy, and which are rather its products and expression.



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The first effect of the Ghost's revelation is characteristic of Hamlet's nature. He and the Ghost both insist on secrecy, as if too much had already been done. Hamlet induces his fellow-witnesses to swear to keep silence about the marvel they have seen; he checks a natural impulse to repeat the Ghost's story; and the Ghost himself, on its way to its subterranean torture-chamber, echoes Hamlet's demand — "Swear, Swear" — in hollow and melodramatic accents. Why this fear to divulge the truth? Why this unnecessary precaution and delay? Why this fantastic notion, at once imposing itself on the hero's mind, that there would be occasion for him to feign madness and put an antic disposition on? The simple truth is, that the play pre-exists and imposes itself here on the poet, who is reduced to paving the way as best he can for the foregone complications. Had Hamlet forthwith communicated his mission to his friends and rushed with them to the banquet hall where the King was at that moment carousing, had he instantly despatched the usurper and proclaimed himself king in his stead, there would have been no occasion for four more acts and for so much heart-searching soliloquy. The given plot is the starting-point, and its irrationality at this juncture, by which the comic effects of a feigned madness were secured for the playwright, must be accepted as a fundamental datum on which incidents and characters are alike built up.

Those who have maintained that Hamlet is really mad had this partial justification for their paradox, that Hamlet is irrational. He acts without reflection, as he reflects

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without acting. At the basis of all his ingenuity and reasoning, of his nimble wit and varied feeling, lies this act of inexplicable folly : that he conceals his discovery, postpones his vengeance before questioning its propriety, and descends with no motive to a grotesque and pitiful piece of dissimulation. This unreason is not madness, because his intellect remains clear, his discourse sound and comprehensive ; but it is a sort of passionate weakness and indirection in his will, which mocks its own ends, strikes fantastic attitudes, and invents elaborate schemes of action useless for his declared purposes. The psychology of Hamlet is like that which some German metaphysicians have attributed to their Spirit of the World, which is the prey to its own perversity and to what is called romantic irony, so that it eternally pursues the good in a way especially designed never to attain it. In Hamlet, as in them, beneath this histrionic duplicity and earnestness about the unreal, there is a very genuine pathos. Such brilliant futility is really helpless and sick at heart. The clouded will which plays with all these artifices of thought would fain break its way to light and self-knowledge through this magic circle of sophistication. It is the tragedy of a soul buzzing in the glass prison of a world which it can neither escape nor understand, in which it flutters about without direction, without clear hope, and yet with many a keen pang, many a dire imaginary problem, and much exquisite music.

This morbid indirection of Hamlet's, in the given situation, yields the rest of the play. Its theme is a hidden crime met by a fantastic and incapable virtue. The

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hero's reaction takes various forms: his soliloquies and reflections, his moody and artful treatment of other persons, his plans and spurts of action. In soliloquy Hamlet is much the same from the beginning to the end of the piece. His philosophy learns little from events and consequently makes little progress. When he has still nothing more portentous to disturb him than his father's death and his mother's marriage, he already wishes that his too, too solid flesh should melt, and that the Everlasting had not laid His canon against self-slaughter. The uses of this world seem to him even then wholly weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable. This remains his habitual sentiment whenever he looks within, but he can meantime be won over at any moment to shrewd and satirical observation of things external. If the funeral baked meats coldly furnish forth the marriage tables, it is, he tells us, but thrift; nor is his habit of mind at all changed when at the point of highest tension in his adventures, he stops to consider how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar, nor when, in a lull that precedes the last spasm of his destiny, he versifies the same theme:—

“Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:  
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!”

This satirical humour, touching melancholy with the sting of absurdity, crops up everywhere. “I am too much in the sun,” he says, with a bitter and jocular ob-

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scurity. "He is at supper: not where he eats but where he is eaten; a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him."

Reason in young men is an accomplishment rather than a vital function, and may be allowed to play pranks with respectable ideas and to seem capricious and even mad; but while enjoying this license and turning, as it were, somersaults in the air, reason remains by nature the organ of truth, and seizes every opportunity which its game affords to prick some sanctified bubble and aim some home thrust at the foibles of the world. This sort of youthful roguery has a fine sincerity about it; under the sparkle of paradox it shows a loyal heart and a tongue not yet suborned to the praising of familiar or necessary evils. Nevertheless such idealism is lame because it cannot conceive a better alternative to the things it criticises. It stops at bickerings and lamentations which, although we cannot deny the ample warrant they have in experience, leave us disconcerted and in an unstable equilibrium, ready to revert, when imagination falters, to all our old platitudes and conventional judgments. Therefore Hamlet's sad reflections have in the end the merit of humour rather than of wisdom. Their aptness is inconsequential. His sense for what is good and ideal is strong enough to raise him above worldliness and a gross optimism, but it is far too negative and poor to inspire creation in the imaginative sphere or better action in the world.

Hamlet's attitude towards the minor characters in the play is a source of perennial joy to spectators and readers.

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His words and manner to Polonius, Horatio, Rosencranz, and Guildenstern, the players, the grave-diggers, the court messenger, are alike keen, kindly, witty, and noble. Since he is playing at madness he can allow his humour to be broader, his scorn franker, his fancy more wayward than they could well have been otherwise ; yet in all mock disguises appears the same exquisite courtesy, even in that clever and cruel parrying of the King's treachery during the expedition to England. It is when we come to Hamlet's attitude towards the other chief figures, — the Ghost, Ophelia, the Queen, — that we observe a certain indistinctness and dispersion of mind, so that both the hero's character and the poet's intention are, to say the least, less obvious. In the Ghost's presence Hamlet is overcome with feeling, in its absence with doubts. What he ostensibly wishes to have confirmed is the Ghost's veracity, and the play scene is arranged to obtain corroboration of this. Yet when that ostensible doubt is solved and the facts are beyond question, he is no more ready for action than before. He still feels a reluctance to kill the King, founded apparently no longer on doubts about his crime but on scruples or distaste in avenging it. The suspicious element in the Ghost was really less the testimony it gave than the behaviour it inspired, the mission of active vengeance which it seemed to lay on the kindly and meditative prince. Such conduct was indeed conformable to tradition and barbarous practice, but it was opposed to the secret promptings of the man's own mind. In his individual and free reflection he could find more grounds for suicide than for murder. When

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the Ghost appears there is room in Hamlet's heart only for filial affection, and horror at seeing his father in such a shape ; but as the sensuous impression fades it passes into a doubtful and sinister obsession. Hamlet feels that he is leaving a duty unperformed and at the same time that he is being driven on by the devil. If his instinctive hesitation could have expressed itself theoretically he might perhaps have asked whether the treacherous murder of one innocent man could well be righted by more treachery and more murder, involving disaster to many innocent persons. Of course neither a prosaic rationalism of this sort, nor foresight of what in that particular case was likely to ensue, could properly be expected in Hamlet ; yet possibly some premonition of both existed in the poet's mind and gave Hamlet's hesitation that symbolic and moral import which we somehow feel it to possess. Conventional maxims, stock passions, and theological sanctions play very different rôles in different people's lives. In the vulgar they may serve to cloak the absence of genuine principles and of a fixed purpose of any kind. In noble minds they may cheapen the genuine intuitions which they come to clothe, and make these intuitions fall short of that clearness and generosity which they would have shown if they had found free and untrammelled expression. So Hamlet's whole entanglement with the Ghost, and with the crude morality of vengeance which the plot imposes upon him, fails to bring his own soul to a right utterance, and this stifling of his better potential mind is no small part of his tragedy. Or is it only a fond critic's illusion that

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makes us read that better idea into what is a purely unconscious barbarism and a vacillation useful for theatrical purposes?

Toward his mother Hamlet maintains throughout the greater part of the play a wounded reserve appropriate to the situation. He speaks of her with sarcasm, but addresses her with curt respect. Only in the closet scene does he unbosom himself with a somewhat emphatic eloquence, which shows touches of dignity and pathos; yet this scene, central as it is in the plot, hardly rises in power above the level of its neighbours. In comparison, for instance, the scenes with Ophelia are full of wonder and charm. There the poet's imagination flowers out, and Hamlet appears in all his originality and wild inspiration. Yet Ophelia and Hamlet's relation to her are incidental to the drama, while the Queen and her fate are essential to it. We may observe in general that Shakespeare's genius shines in the texture of his poems rather than in their structure, in imagery and happy strokes rather than in integrating ideas. His poetry plays about life like ivy about a house, and is more akin to landscape than to architecture. He feels no vocation to call the stones themselves to their ideal places and enchant the very substance and skeleton of the world. How blind to him, and to Hamlet, are all ultimate issues, and the sum total of things how unseizable! The heathen chaos enveloping everything is all the more sensible on account of the lovely natures which it engulfs. Ophelia, for instance, that slight and too flexible treble in the general dirge, turns it to favour and to prettiness. If she had been a

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casual ornamental figure, like Ariel, introduced only for its own sake, she would not have illustrated so well the main drift of the drama nor been herself so touching an apparition. She is closely bound up with the plot, and what is more important, with the emotion it arouses; yet she is hardly necessary, and Hamlet's affection for her, though a real and congruent part of his experience, forms only an incidental and subordinate part of it. He loved Ophelia before the catastrophe came that unhinged his life; afterwards he remembers her, when he comes across her, as one might remember some tender episode of childhood. His feeling is sentiment rather than passion. He grows sentimental under the influence of her sensuous charm and of her innocence. "Here's metal more attractive," he says in one place; and in another,

"Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd."

His love for her plays no part in his essential resolutions. She does not console him at all, even in his initial bereavement and first suspicions. The speeches in his first scene are not those of a man in love. His pleasure in Ophelia's presence, his interest in his own love, has been undone by enterprises of greater pith and moment. When face to face with her grief, he is not impelled to explain and appeal to her constancy and trust, or invite her to share his calamity. His impulse is merely to despair and throw the blame upon the world at large. "Get thee to a nunnery, go." "Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?" There is doubtless a shade of



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jealousy in this cry, with a touch of tender solicitude to save and screen her from his own troubles. Yet the dominating sentiment is one of helpless regret. He is sorry, very sorry ; but it does not occur to him that he can do anything or can find in Ophelia any resource or inspiration. His love, though sincere, seems to him now one of the frail treasures of his youth, blasted by destiny. It had never taken deep enough root in his soul to endure the blasts of fortune, and be, like his love for his father, one of the moving forces in his destiny itself.

Hamlet's positive and deliberate action is limited to two stratagems, one with the players, to catch the King's conscience, and one by which he makes Rosencranz and Guildenstern suffer the fate prepared for himself in England. In both cases Hamlet betrays a sort of exuberance and wild delight. He feels the luxury of hitting home, the absolute joy of playing the game, without particular reference to the end in view. The speech in which he recounts his escape from shipboard and his counterfeiting the King's letter, positively bubbles over with high spirits and the sense of mastery. In the play scene, too, he is all vivacity and eager comments. He cannot suppress his tense excitement, and comes near defeating his plan by disclosing it prematurely. When the bubble has burst and his point is gained, he is incoherent in his exultation, in his relief at having discovered the worst, and his joy at having verified his expectations. If he acts seldom and with difficulty, it is not because he does not hugely enjoy action. Yet his delight is in the shimmer and movement of action rather than in its use, so that the

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weakness of his character appears just as much in his bursts of activity as in his long hesitations. He kills Polonius by accident, hoping that in a blind thrust through the arras he might turn out at last to have despatched the King ; and when, himself mortally wounded, he finally executes that long-meditated sentence, he can do so only by yielding to a sudden hysterical impulse. So consistently does unreason pursue him : an inexplicable crime is followed by a miraculous vision ; that portent he meets by a senseless and too congenial pretence of madness ; a successful stratagem confirms the King's guilt, but does not lead to his exposure or punishment, rather to a passive reconciliation with him on Hamlet's part. Innocent persons meantime perish, and the end is a general but casual slaughter, amid treachery, misunderstandings, and ghastly confusions.

This picture of universal madness is relieved by the very finest and purest glints of wit, intelligence, and feeling. It is crammed with exquisite lines, and vivified by most interesting and moving characters, in great variety, all drawn with masterly breadth, depth, and precision. Hamlet, in particular, as our analysis testifies, is more than a vivid dramatic figure, more than an unparalleled poetic vision. He lays bare the heart of a whole race, or, perhaps we should rather say, expresses a conflict to which every soul is more or less liable. There is a kind of initial earnestness in all life which in some people remains predominant ; a certain soulfulness and idealism which the Germans attribute especially to themselves, but which they would probably recognise also in the

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deeper intuitions of English poetry. It is a mood proper to youth ; and youth in a race (since there is no question of a shorter descent from Adam or his Darwinian rival) can only mean that at a given juncture sentiment, fancy, and dialectic have outrun external experience. Youth is far from implying less complexity than age or a meaner endowment, for youth, at least potentially, often has the advantage in these respects. Youth means only less complete adjustment of capacity to opportunity, of intelligence to practice and art. In a fertile mind such want of adjustment intensifies self-consciousness and, because so much that the mind is pregnant with remains unexpressed and untested, it produces a sense of vague profundity which is often an illusion. An unexpressed mind may be deep, but is none the deeper for not exercising itself successfully on real things ; and though it need not lack poetry or philosophy for being comparatively without experience, yet its poetry will tend to be irrelevant and fantastic, and its philosophy *a priori*. The former will show more airy richness than rational beauty, and the latter more ingenuity than wisdom. These characteristics, whether or not essential to the spirit of "The North," are unmistakably present in Hamlet's person. They render his moral being "dark, true, and tender." He is strong in his integrity and purity of purpose, but lost in floating emotion, perplexed by want of concentration and of self-knowledge. (Here is immense endowment and strange incompetence, constant perspicacity and general confusion, entire virtue in the intention, and complete disaster in the result.)

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An apt pupil of philosophy, of politics, of art, of love, Hamlet is master in nothing. The solution eludes him for every riddle and even for every plain question; and his vast consciousness is ignorant of its own function. Compare with such a mind what may be called by contrast the mind of the East or South, the mind of fatigued and long-indoctrinated races, disillusioned, distinct, malicious, for the most part unblushingly subservient to interest, passion, or superstition (for this temperament is too worn and skeptical to think rebellion worth while), yet in its reflective phase detached and contemplative, able occasionally to despise all entanglements, to dominate the will, and to look truth in the eye without blinking. If Shakespeare had intended to make his drama allegorical of this contrast, he could not have hit upon a better theme and title: Hamlet the Dane! How that name evokes the image of virgin and barbarous heroes standing on the horizon of the world! Their experience upon descending among the nations must have been quite like Hamlet's on finding himself suddenly in a perverse world. They too must have been burdened with longing, scornful of corruption, touched yet puzzled by Christianity, attracted yet wounded by civilisation. Although Shakespeare was troubled, of course, by no such thought of historic symbolism, and made Hamlet in all externals a prince of Queen Elizabeth's time, yet the assimilation would not on that account cease to be possible. It was at bottom no anachronism to give a barbaric jewel an Elizabethan setting. The old Norseman's soul was uncontaminated by migration into a

## HAMLET

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richer age and a milder air ; in fact the poet's nation had not, in spirit, outgrown or disowned its ancestry.

The ghost scenes in "Hamlet" are excellent examples of profound, ill-digested emotions breaking out fiercely against circumstances which are not well in hand, and which consequently are not met intelligently or successfully by the inspiration in question. This ghost is not like the deities that often appear in Greek tragedy, a *deus ex machina* coming to solve, in the light of serene thought and eternal interests, the tangled problems of the single life. On the contrary, this ghost is a party to the conflict, an instigator of sinister thoughts, a thing hatched in a nest of sorrows. Its scope is so exclusively personal that it may well seem the very coinage of the brain ; yet it is ostensibly miraculous, noble, pathetic, veracious. It is at once a spectre and a suspicion, a physical marvel and an inward and authoritative voice. Our reason itself flits with this ghost through a night half mockery and half horror. We feel that not Hamlet the Dane but the human soul in its inmost depths is moonstruck and haunted. Poetry, in these wonderful scenes, does not entrance by presenting natural and heavenly harmonies so convincingly that the heart too begins to beat in unison with them ; that might be the highest achievement of some classic poet. Here, when the deepest note is sounded, we can only cry, "O Hamlet ! thou hast cleft my heart in twain." We wait to see the spectacle of things dissolved and exorcised. The fretted pipe has defied all earthly powers to play upon it, this too, too solid flesh has melted away, and the rest, as Hamlet says, is silence.

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All this, however, is only half, and the less intentional half, of what comes before us in this unfathomable poem. The impression of utter gloom which the plot leaves when taken, so to speak, realistically, as if it were a picture of actual existences, is not the impression it leaves when we take it as lyric poetry, as music, as an abstract representation of sundry moods and loyalties traversing a noble mind. The world which is set before us may be grotesque and distracted ; but we are not asked to be interested in that world. Had Hamlet himself been interested in it, he would have acted more rationally. It was not intelligence or courage that he lacked ; it was practical conviction or sense for reality. Had he possessed this he would have turned his wits and sympathies towards improving the given situation, as he turns them towards improving the player's art. In truth he cared nothing for the world ; man pleased him not, no, nor woman, neither ; and we may well abandon to its natural confusion a dream in which we do not believe. Had Hamlet tried to justify his temperament by expressing it in a philosophy, he would have been an idealist. He would have said that events were only occasions for exercising the spirit ; they were nothing but imagined situations meant to elicit a certain play of mind. If a man's comments had been keen, if his heart had been tender, if his will had been upright and pure, the rest was nothing. The world might feign to be mad and put on an antic disposition ; it was sane enough if it fulfilled its purpose and gave a man an opportunity to test his own mettle. Those idiocies and horrors which he lived among would

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have been in truth the flights of angels that bore him to his rest. At any rate, express it how we will, the sympathetic reader will instinctively feel that he should pass over lightly the experience which the play depicts and carry away from it only the moral feeling, the spiritual sentiment, which it calls forth in the characters. As the poet himself thought a violent and somewhat absurd fable not unworthy to support his richest verse and subtlest characterisations, so we must take the fabric of destiny, in this tragedy and in that, too, which we enact in the world, as it happens to be, and think the moral lights that flicker through it bright enough to redeem it.

We must remember that the modern mind, like the modern world, is compacted out of ruins, and that the fresh northern spirit, inducted into that Byzantine labyrinth which we call civilisation, feels a marked discord between its genius and its culture. The latter is alien and imperfectly grafted on the living stem from which it must draw its sap. Hence the most radical and excruciating experience of the romantic mind comes from just such hereditary incoherence, just such perplexity and half-feigned madness, just such obsession by artifices, as Hamlet presents to us in a tragic miniature. The deep interest of this figure lies accordingly in its affinity to the situation in which every romantic spirit must in a measure find itself. There is no richer or more exquisite monument to the failure of emotional good-will, and of intelligence inclined to embroider rather than to build. So absolute a feat of imagination cannot be ranked in comparison with other works, nor estimated by any standard

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of which it does not itself furnish the suggestion and type. It is rather to be studied and absorbed, to be made a part of our habitual landscape and mental furniture, lest we should miss much of what is deepest and rarest in human feeling. If we care to pass, however, from admiration of the masterpiece to reflection on the experience it expresses, we see that here is no necessary human tragedy, no universal destiny or divine law. It is a picture of incidental unfitness, of a genius wasted for being plucked quite unripe from the sunny places of the world. In Hamlet our incoherent souls see their own image; in him romantic potentiality and romantic failure wears each its own feature. In him we see the gifts most congenial and appealing to us reduced to a pathetic impotence because of the disarray in which we are content to leave them.

GEORGE SANTAYANA.





# **HAMLET**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.

HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.

POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.

HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.

LAERTES, son to Polonius.

VOLTIMAND,

CORNELIUS,

ROSENCRANTZ,

GUILDENSTERN,

OSRIC,

A Gentleman,

A Priest.

} courtiers.

MARCELLUS,

BERNARDO,

} officers.

FRANCISCO, a soldier.

REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.

Players.

Two Clowns, grave-diggers.

FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.

A Captain.

English Ambassadors.

GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.

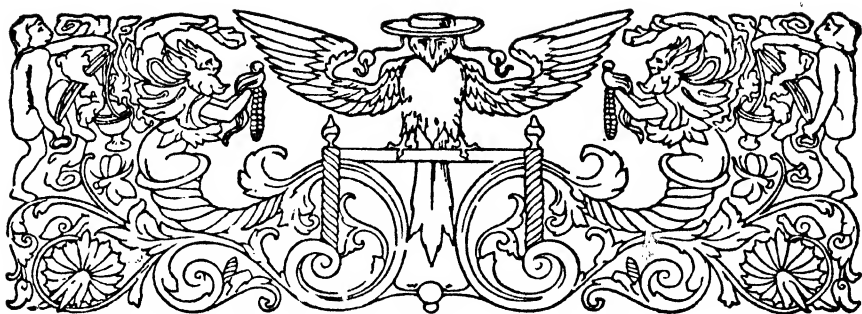
OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

SCENE: *Denmark*

<sup>1</sup> This piece was first printed in quarto very imperfectly in 1603. A fuller and better text was published in quarto in 1604, and this was reissued in 1605, in 1611, in an undated volume (about 1612), in 1637, and four or five times later. The improved text of the First Folio follows a different transcript. The Quartos have no divisions into Acts or Scenes. The Folio only marks the Acts and Scenes as far as Act II, Scene ii. Rowe first completed the distribution of Acts and Scenes, and first supplied a list of the "dramatis personæ," and the "Scene."



ACT FIRST — SCENE I — ELSINORE

*A PLATFORM BEFORE THE CASTLE*

FRANCISCO at his post. *Enter to him* BERNARDO

BERNARDO



HO'S THERE?

FRAN. Nay, answer me: stand,  
and unfold yourself.

BER. Long live the king!

FRAN. Bernardo?

BER. He.

FRAN. You come most carefully  
upon your hour.

BER. 'Tis now struck twelve;  
get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRAN. For this relief much  
thanks: 'tis bitter cold,  
And I am sick at heart.

BER. Have you had quiet guard?

FRAN.

Not a mouse stirring. 10

2 *Nay, answer me*] "Me" is the emphatic word. The speaker is the sentinel still on duty, and challenges the newcomer, Bernardo, who has arrived to relieve guard.

BER. Well, good night.  
 If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
 The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

FRAN. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is there?

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS*

HOR. Friends to this ground.

MAR. And liegemen to the Dane.

FRAN. Give you good night.

MAR. O, farewell, honest soldier:  
 Who hath relieved you?

FRAN. Bernardo hath my place.  
 Give you good night. [Exit.

MAR. Holla! Bernardo!

BER. Say,  
 What, is Horatio there?

HOR. A piece of him.

BER. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus. 20

MAR. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

BER. I have seen nothing.

MAR. Horatio says 't is but our fantasy,  
 And will not let belief take hold of him  
 Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:  
 Therefore I have entreated him along

13 *rivals*] partners. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, III, v, 8: "rivality," i. e., partnership.

16 *Give you good night*] May God give you good night.

19 *A piece of him*] A jesting meiosis: "what there is of him."

21 *What, . . . to-night?*] The First Quarto and the Folios give this line (as here) to Marcellus; the other early editions give it to Horatio.

With us to watch the minutes of this night,  
That if again this apparition come,  
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HOR. Tush, tush, 't will not appear.

BER. Sit down a while; 30  
And let us once again assail your ears,  
That are so fortified against our story,  
What we have two nights seen.

HOR. Well, sit we down,  
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BER. Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one, —

*Enter Ghost*

MAR. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes  
again! 40

BER. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MAR. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BER. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

HOR. Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BER. It would be spoke to.

MAR. Question it, Horatio.

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29 *approve our eyes*] confirm or make good our vision.

42 *Thou art a scholar; speak to it*] The exorcism of evil spirits was commonly couched in Latin, and the exorcist was necessarily a Latin scholar. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 228: "I would to God *some scholar would conjure her*," and I, v, 156, *infra*.

HOR. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and warlike form  
In which the majesty of buried Denmark  
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

MAR. It is offended.

BER. See, it stalks away! 50

HOR. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[Exit Ghost.

MAR. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BER. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:  
Is not this something more than fantasy?  
What think you on't?

HOR. Before my God, I might not this believe  
Without the sensible and true avouch  
Of mine own eyes.

MAR. Is it not like the king?

HOR. As thou art to thyself:  
Such was the very armour he had on 60  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.  
'Tis strange.

57 *the sensible and true avouch*] the perceptible and actual evidence.

62 *parle*] parley.

63 *sledded Polacks*] *Polacks*, *i. e.*, Poles, is Malone's change for *pollax* or *Pollax*, the reading of all editions earlier than the Fourth Folio, which reads *Pole-axe*. *Polacks* is confirmed by the use of the word, II, ii, 63, 75, *infra*. "Sledded" seems connected with "sled" (*i. e.*, sleigh or sledge). Fynes Morison, in his *Itinerary*, 1617 (pt. i, 63 and pt. iii, 104), notes that the Poles habitually travelled in "sledges." He also (pt. iii, 170-1) describes them as wearing, when under arms,

MAR. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,  
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HOR. In what particular thought to work I know not;  
But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,  
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MAR. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows, 70  
Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land,  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war;  
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;  
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:  
Who is't that can inform me?

HOR. That can I;  
At least the whisper goes so. Our last king,

80

“shoes of leather and also of wood both painted & both shodde under the heele & toes with pieces of Iron making great noise as they goe,” — a description which has suggested that “sledged” or “sleaded” may refer to the heavy manner in which the Poles were shod. Possibly “sledged,” as an epithet of “pole-axe,” might also mean either “leaded” or “sledge” (*i. e.*, heavy) as in “sledge-hammer.” But it is more reasonable to assume that during a hard winter the elder Hamlet lost his temper in some negotiation with Polish foes (whether “sledged” refers to their sledges or their heavy boots) and struck them, than that a heavy pole-axe was his weapon of war. War between Norway and Poland is noticed, II, ii, 60–76, *infra*.

68 *in the gross and scope*] according to the main purport.

72 *So nightly . . . land*] Causes the people to toil so constantly by night.

74 *foreign mart*] traffic with foreigners.

75 *impress*] coercive enlistment.



Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
 Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
 Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
 Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet —  
 For so this side of our known world esteem'd him —  
 Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact,  
 Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands  
 Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:  
 Against the which, a moiety competent 90  
 Was gaged by our king; which had return'd  
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant  
 And carriage of the article design'd,  
 His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
 Of unimproved metal hot and full,  
 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
 Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,  
 For food and diet, to some enterprise  
 That hath a stomach in 't: which is no other — 100  
 As it doth well appear unto our state —

87 *by law and heraldry*] by ordinary law and the code of chivalry.

90 *a moiety competent*] an equivalent portion of land.

93 *covenant*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *comart*, a rare word meaning "joint-bargain."

94 *carriage . . . design'd*] bearing or purport of the drawn agreement.

96 *unimproved*] unproved. Thus all early editions, save the First Quarto, which reads *inapproved*, i. e., untried.

98-100 *Shark'd up . . . resolute . . . a stomach in 't*] Raked together a band of determined desperadoes, seeking only food and diet, to engage in some enterprise that has spirit or smack of adventure in it.

101 *our state*] the rulers of our state.

But to recover of us, by strong hand  
 And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands  
 So by his father lost: and this, I take it,  
 Is the main motive of our preparations,  
 The source of this our watch and the chief head  
 Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

BER. I think it be no other but e'en so:  
 Well may it sort, that this portentous figure  
 Comes armed through our watch, so like the king 110  
 That was and is the question of these wars.

HOR. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:

. . . . .  
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

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103 *compulsatory*] compulsory. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *compulsive*. Both forms are rare. Cf. III, iv, 86, *infra*, "compulsive."

106-107 *the chief head . . . romage*] the chief cause or aim of this hurry and bustle. "Romage," now commonly written "rummage," usually means "hurried search," "ransacking."

108-125 *I think it be . . . countrymen*] This passage is only found in the Quartos.

109 *Well may it sort*] Well may it agree with, account for.

114-118 *A little . . . sun*] Some of these portents are similarly noticed in *Jul. Cæs.*, Act II, Sc. ii.

117-118 *As stars . . . sun*] This sentence lacks a verb. It is usually assumed that a preceding line, such as *In the heavens above strange portents did appear* (Hunter), has dropped out of the text. It is possible that the introductory *As* has the elliptical force, "So also there were."

Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,  
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse: 120  
 And even the like precurse of fierce events,  
 As harbingers preceding still the fates  
 And prologue to the omen coming on,  
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.

*Re-enter Ghost*

But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!  
 I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!  
 If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
 Speak to me:  
 If there be any good thing to be done, 130  
 That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
 Speak to me:  
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
 Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,  
 O, speak!  
 Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

118 *the moist star*] the moon, which governs the tides. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, I, ii, 1, "the watery star."

120 *almost to doomsday*] almost to death.

121 *precurse*] forerunning, foreboding. Cf. *Phœnix and Turtle*, line 6, "precursor," and *Temp.*, I, ii, 201, "precursors."

125 *our climatures*] those living in our climes.

127 *I'll cross it, . . . illusion*] Anyone crossing the path of a ghost was thought to incur death. The Quarto of 1604 adds to this line the stage direction, *It spreads his armes*.

134 *Which . . . foreknowing*] Of which perchance a foreknowledge.

136-138 *Or if thou . . . in death*] Misers who kept buried in the earth

Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,  
 Speak of it: stay, and speak! [*The cock crows.*] Stop  
 it, Marcellus.

MAR. Shall I strike at it with my partisan? 140

HOR. Do, if it will not stand.

BER. 'T is here!

HOR. 'T is here!

MAR. 'T is gone! [*Exit Ghost.*]

We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
 To offer it the show of violence;  
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BER. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HOR. And then it started like a guilty thing  
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,  
 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn, 150  
 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
 Awake the god of day, and at his warning,  
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
 The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
 To his confine: and of the truth herein  
 This present object made probation.

MAR. It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
 Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,

---

wrongly acquired gold, could not, it was supposed, sleep in peace in  
 the grave.

140 *partisan*] the watchman's pike.

154 *extravagant and erring*] Both words mean much the same, *i. e.*,  
 vagrant, wandering.

The bird of dawning singeth all night long: 160  
 And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,  
 The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,  
 No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm,  
 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

HOR. So have I heard and do in part believe it.  
 But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:  
 Break we our watch up; and by my advice,  
 Let us impart what we have seen to-night  
 Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life, 170  
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:  
 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

MAR. Let's do 't, I pray; and I this morning know  
 Where we shall find him most conveniently. . . [Exeunt.]

## SCENE II—A ROOM OF STATE IN THE CASTLE

*Flourish.* Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,  
 VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants

KING. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,

162-163 *no planets strike . . . takes*] Both verbs, "strike" and "takes," refer to the malignant influences exerted by planets or fairies. The word "strike" is similarly used in "moon-struck." "Take" means "infect with evil," "bewitch." Cf. *Lear*, II, iv, 162: "You *taking* airs."

Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
 The imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
 Have we, as 't were with a defeated joy, — 10  
 With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —  
 Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
 With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
 Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
 Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, 20  
 Colleague'd with this dream of his advantage,  
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
 Importing the surrender of those lands  
 Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,

9 *jointress*] heiress. The word is sometimes applied to a widow in enjoyment of a jointure.

10 *a defeated joy*] a marred joy.

11 *an . . . a*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios repeat *one* in place of both *an* and *a*. The meaning is "one eye is happy and the other tearful." Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, ii, 72-73: "She had *one eye declin'd . . . another elevated*."

14 *barr'd*] excluded, ignored.

17 *that you know*] that which you know.

21 *Colleague'd with . . . advantage*] Combined with this fancy of his superiority. The syntax seems irregular. The clause strictly speaking qualifies "a weak supposal" of line 17.

23 *Importing*] Importuning.

24 *bonds*] Thus the Folio. The Quartos read *bands*, a common variant.

To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting:  
 Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —  
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
 Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress  
 His further gait herein; in that the levies,  
 The lists and full proportions, are all made  
 Out of his subject: and we here dispatch  
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
 Giving to you no further personal power  
 To business with the king more than the scope  
 Of these delated articles allow.  
 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

30

COR. }  
 VOL. } In that and all things will we show our duty. 40

KING. We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
 You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
 And lose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,  
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?

31 *gait*] procedure, progress.

32 *full proportions*] full numbers (of the troops).

38 *delated*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *dilated*. Both forms are found in the sense of "set out at length." "Delated" is occasionally used for "carried," but not so here.

44-45 *You cannot . . . voice*] No reasonable request which you make to the ruler of Denmark will be refused.

The head is not more native to the heart,  
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
 What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAER. My dread lord, 50  
 Your leave and favour to return to France,  
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,  
 To shew my duty in your coronation,  
 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France  
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING. Have you your father's leave? What says  
 Polonius?

POL. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
 By laboursome petition, and at last  
 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent: 60  
 I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
 And thy best graces spend it at thy will!  
 But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, —

47 *native*] natural, cognate, essential. Cf. IV, vii, 180, *infra*.

56 *leave and pardon*] permission and grant of (leave of absence). Cf.  
 III, ii, 309, *infra*.

58–60 *wrung . . . hard consent*] Thus the Quartos. The words are  
 omitted from the Folios.

60 *hard consent*] reluctant assent.

63 *thy best graces . . . will*] thy best virtues guide thee in spending thy  
 time as thou wilt; put thy time to the best advantage.

64 *my cousin*] my kinsman. Hamlet was of course the speaker's nephew  
 and step-son. "Cousin" was used of any blood relationship.



HAM. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAM. Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

QUEEN. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not for ever with thy veiled lids

70

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity.

HAM. Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN. If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAM. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not  
"seems."

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

80

Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,

65 *kin . . . kind*] In this play upon words Hamlet is speaking to himself and commenting on the king's greeting of him as "cousin" and "son."

Hamlet professes to be a little more than a kinsman (being both nephew and step-son), but deficient in sentiments of natural affection.

"Kind" often means "nature," and there is a quibble here on its use in that sense, and as the adjective for "kind" or "affectionate."

67 *i' the sun*] *sc.*, of the court. Hamlet has in mind the old ironical proverb "Out of God's blessing into the warm sun" (*i. e.*, from bad to worse).

68 *thy nighted colour*] the gloomy hue of thy countenance or expression.

Cf. *Lear*, IV, v, 13, "his *nighted* life."

70 *veiled lids*] downcast eyes.

Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
 That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,  
 For they are actions that a man might play:  
 But I have that within which passeth show;  
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING. 'T is sweet and commendable in your nature,  
 Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father:  
 But, you must know, your father lost a father,  
 That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound 90  
 In filial obligation for some term  
 To do obsequious sorrow: but to persevere  
 In obstinate condolment is a course  
 Of impious stubbornness; 't is unmanly grief:  
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
 A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
 An understanding simple and unschool'd:  
 For what we know must be and is as common  
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
 Why should we in our peevish opposition 100  
 Take it to heart? Fie! 't is a fault to heaven,  
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
 To reason most absurd, whose common theme

82 *moods*] Thus the early editions. A late Quarto (of 1695) reads *modes*, which Capell and other editors adopt.

92 *obsequious sorrow*] sorrow connected with funeral rites. Cf. *Tit. Andr.*, V, iii, 152: "*obsequious tears*."

*persever*] persevere, persist. The accent is on the second syllable.

93 *condolment*] lamentation. See note on *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, ii, 22: "I will move storms, I will *condole* in some measure."

95 *incorrect to heaven*] contumacious of heaven.

Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,  
 From the first corse till he that died to-day,  
 "This must be so." We pray you, throw to earth  
 This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
 As of a father: for let the world take note,  
 You are the most immediate to our throne,  
 And with no less nobility of love  
 Than that which dearest father bears his son  
 Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
 It is most retrograde to our desire:  
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
 Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin and our son.

110

QUEEN. Let not thy mother lose her prayers,  
 Hamlet:

I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

106-107 *throw to earth . . . unprevailing*] cast away . . . unavailing.

109 *the most immediate to our throne*] The crown of Denmark was elective. Claudius, the late king's brother, had been preferred to Hamlet, the late king's son. Hamlet says (V, ii, 65, *infra*) that his uncle had "popp'd in between the election and my hopes." Hamlet was only next heir in the sense that the sovereign was usually chosen from the family which had already filled the throne, that he was now its only male representative, and that his candidature had the support of the reigning monarch, a fact which is again mentioned (III, ii, 332-3, *infra*).

112 *impart toward you*] communicate to you, offer you. There is a confusion of construction. "With" in line 110 does not harmonise with "impart," and is superfluous.

113 *to school in Wittenberg*] to study in Wittenberg University, a seat of learning founded in 1502, which was familiar to Elizabethan writers as the home of Luther and of Dr. Faustus.

HAM. I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 120

KING. Why, 't is a loving and a fair reply:  
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,  
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

HAM. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew! 130  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't! ah fie! 't is an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature

127 *And the king's rouse . . . again*] Heaven shall reverberate with the sound of the king's carouse. "Rouse" is sometimes used in the sense of "bumper," "deep draught." Cf. I, iv, 8, *supra*: "The king . . . takes his rouse." The king's addiction to drink is strongly emphasised throughout the play.

129 *too too*] a duplicative intensive. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, iv, 201: "I love his lady *too too* much."

*solid*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *sallied*, which has been defended as meaning "rebellious," formed from the French "*saillie*," a sally, a violent outbreak.

130 *resolve itself*] dissolve.

131-132 *Or that the Everlasting . . . self-slaughter*] Cf. *Cymb.*, III, iv, 74-75: "Against *self-slaughter* There is a *prohibition so divine*."

132 *canon*] The early editions read *cannon*.

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
 But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:  
 So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
 Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother, 140  
 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
 Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,  
 As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on: and yet, within a month —  
 Let me not think on 't — Frailty, thy name is woman! —  
 A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
 Like Niobe, all tears: — why she, even she, —  
 O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason 150  
 Would have mourn'd longer, — married with my  
 uncle,  
 My father's brother, but no more like my father

140 *Hyperion to a satyr*] The sun-god (a type of beauty) compared to a satyr (a type of physical ugliness). See III, iv, 56, *infra*, "Hyperion's curls," where Shakespeare seems to identify Hyperion with "flavus Apollo." Ovid (*Metam.*, viii, 365 and xv, 406), following Homer, calls the sun Hyperion. Shakespeare and all the Elizabethan writers defy classical usage by accenting the word on the second syllable instead of the third. See *Hen. V*, IV, i, 271.

141 *beteem*] suffer, permit: a rare usage. In *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 131, Shakespeare uses the word in the commoner sense of "grant."

149 *Niobe*] Ovid, *Metam.*, vi, 146-312, tells the story how Niobe, wife of Amphion, King of Thebes, was changed into a rock from which a perennial stream flowed, owing to her excessive weeping for the death of her twelve children.

150 *discourse of reason*] reasoning faculty, the discursive faculty. Cf. IV, iv, 36, *infra*: "such large *discourse*."

Than I to Hercuies: within a month;  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good:  
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO*

HOR. Hail to your lordship!

HAM. I am glad to see you well:  
 Horatio, — or I do forget myself. 161

HOR. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAM. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name  
 with you:

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?  
 Marcellus?

MAR. My good lord?

HAM. I am very glad to see you. [*To Ber.*] Good  
 even, sir.

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

155 *Had left the flushing*] Had left off or ceased sluicing her smarting eyes.

For *in*, the reading of the Quartos, the Folios give *of*. "Flushing" means washing out with water, or sluicing, as in "*flushing* a drain."

163 *I'll change that name with you*] I'll be "your poor servant," you shall be "my good friend."

164 *what make you*] what are you doing? Cf. the German phrase *Was machen Sie?*

167 *Good even*] Often used in the sense of "Good afternoon." In I, i, 174, *supra*, Marcellus makes it plain that this meeting with Hamlet takes place early in the day.

HOR. A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAM. I would not hear your enemy say so, 170  
Nor shall you do my ear that violence,  
To make it truster of your own report  
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.  
But what is your affair in Elsinore?  
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HOR. My lord, I came to see your father's  
funeral.

HAM. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;  
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HOR. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAM. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked-  
meats 180

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

My father! — methinks I see my father.

HOR. O where, my lord?

HAM. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HOR. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

HAM. He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

HOR. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAM. Saw? who? 190

---

170 *hear*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *haue*.

180 *baked-meats*] cold baked pies or pastry, which formed a chief part of the repast commonly given after funerals.

182 *dearest*] greatest or worst. "Dear" is constantly used as an epithet implying excessive emotion whether of hate or love.

HOR. My lord, the king your father.

HAM. The king my father!

HOR. Season your admiration for a while  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

HAM. For God's love, let me hear.

HOR. Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe, 200  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd  
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd  
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;  
And I with them the third night kept the watch:  
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,

192 *Season your admiration*] Temper your surprise.

193 *attent*] Thus the Second and Third Quartos and the first two Folios.  
The other early editions have the commoner form *attentive*.

198 *the dead vast . . . of the night*] the still void . . . of the night. Cf.  
*Temp.*, I, ii, 327: "*vast of night*." Some early editions needlessly  
substitute *waste* for *vast*.

200 *at point exactly*] at all points completely.

204-205 *distill'd . . . with the act of fear*] melted, dissolved . . . through  
the operation of fear.

209 *deliver'd*] reported.



Form of the thing, each word made true and good, 210  
 The apparition comes: I knew your father;  
 These hands are not more like.

HAM. But where was this?

MAR. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAM. Did you not speak to it?

HOR. My lord, I did,

But answer made it none: yet once methought  
 It lifted up it head and did address  
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak:  
 But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away  
 And vanish'd from our sight.

HAM. 'T is very strange.

220

HOR. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 't is true,  
 And we did think it writ down in our duty  
 To let you know of it.

HAM. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
 Hold you the watch to-night?

MAR. }

BER. }

We do, my lord.

HAM. Arm'd, say you?

MAR. }

BER. }

Arm'd, my lord.

HAM.

From top to toe?

MAR. }

BER. }

My lord, from head to foot.

HAM. Then saw you not his face?

---

216 *it*] Thus the early editions; the later editions read *its*. "It" is the old form of "its."

HOR. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

HAM. What, look'd he frowningly? 230

HOR. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAM. Pale, or red?

HOR. Nay, very pale.

HAM. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HOR. Most constantly.

HAM. I would I had been there.

HOR. It would have much amazed you.

HAM. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

HOR. While one with moderate haste might tell a  
hundred.

MAR. }  
BER. } Longer, longer.

HOR. Not when I saw 't.

HAM. His beard was grizzled? no?

HOR. It was, as I have seen it in his life, 240  
A sable silver'd.

HAM. I will watch to-night;  
Perchance 't will walk again.

HOR. I warrant it will.

HAM. If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape  
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,  
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still,

229 *beaver*] the movable portion of the helmet covering the face.

235 *amazed you*] startled you.

247 *tenable*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *treble*, probably a misprint, although it has been doubtfully defended on the awkward ground that the line may mean "Let all three of you keep silence about it."

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,  
 Give it an understanding, but no tongue:  
 I will requite your loves. So fare you well: 250  
 Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
 I'll visit you.

ALL. Our duty to your honour.

HAM. Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;  
 I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!  
 Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,  
 Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit.*]

### SCENE III—A ROOM IN POLONIUS'S HOUSE

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA*

LAER. My necessities are embark'd: farewell:  
 And, sister, as the winds give benefit  
 And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
 But let me hear from you.

OPH. Do you doubt that?

LAER. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,  
 Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,  
 A violet in the youth of primy nature,

255 *I doubt some foul play*] Cf. I, v, 40, *infra*: "O my prophetic soul!"

3 *convoy is assistant*] there is convenient means of conveyance.

5-6 *For Hamlet . . . in blood*] As for Hamlet and his careless show of attention to you, regard it as a passing phase, and a whim of impulse.

7 *primy nature*] nature in spring-tide.

Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;  
No more.

OPH. No more but so?

LAER. Think it no more: 10  
For nature crescent does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now;  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
The virtue of his will: but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
For he himself is subject to his birth:  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends 20  
The safety and health of this whole state,  
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body

8 *Forward*] Precocious, premature.

9 *suppliance of a minute*] mere pastime, filling up an idle minute.

11 *crescent*] in the growing stage.

12 *this temple*] the corporeal frame. The word temple suggests (religious)  
"service" of the next line.

14 *Grows wide withal*] Extends its present scope.

15 *no soil nor cautel*] no blemish nor craft.

17 *His greatness weigh'd*] When one considers the eminence of his rank.

21 *safety*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *sanctity*, for which Theobald substituted *sanity*. *Safety* best suits the context, but must be pronounced trisyllabically.

22-23 *circumscribed . . . body*] limited by the approval and consent of the nation.

Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
 As he in his particular act and place  
 May give his saying deed; which is no further  
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,  
 If with too credent ear you list his songs, 30  
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
 To his unmaster'd importunity.  
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
 The chariest maid is prodigal enough,  
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:  
 Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:  
 The canker galls the infants of the spring  
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed, 40  
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
 Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:  
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPH. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,

---

26-27 *As he . . . deed*] Only so far as his peculiar function and position is likely to enable him to make his promise good. For the Quarto reading *particular act and place*, the Folios read somewhat less intelligibly, *peculiar sect and force*.

32 *unmaster'd*] unrestrained, licentious.

36 *chariest*] most scrupulous.

39-40 *The canker . . . the infants of the spring . . . buttons*] The canker-worm . . . the young plants . . . buds.

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
 Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads  
 And recks not his own rede.

50

LAER. O, fear me not.  
 I stay too long: but here my father comes.

*Enter* POLONIUS

A double blessing is a double grace;  
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POL. Yet here, Laertes! Aboard, aboard, for shame!  
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
 And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!  
 And these few precepts in thy memory  
 Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.  
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
 Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.  
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
 Of each new-hatch'd unfledged comrade. Beware

60

---

47 *ungracious*] graceless.

51 *recks not . . . rede*] cares nothing for his own counsel.

58 *these few precepts*] Parallels for much of Polonius' advice appear in "the few precepts" given by Euphues to his friend Philautus in Lyly's didactic romance of *Euphues and his England* (1580, p. 246).

59 *character*] inscribe. The accent is on the second syllable.

60 *unproportion'd*] ugly, ill-proportioned.

61 *vulgar*] cheap, accessible to everybody, at everybody's call.

64 *dull*] blunt the nice sensibilities of.

Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,  
 Bear 't, that the opposed may beware of thee.  
 Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice:  
 Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.  
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, 70  
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:  
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man;  
 And they in France of the best rank and station  
 Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
 Neither a borrower nor a lender be:  
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
 This above all: to thine own self be true,  
 And it must follow, as the night the day,  
 Thou canst not then be false to any man. 80  
 Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

LAER. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POL. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

69 *Take each man's censure*] Receive all opinions.

71 *not express'd in fancy*] not tricked out in fanciful ornament.

74 *Are . . . chief in that*] Thus the Folios. The First Quarto reads *generall* for *generous*. The Second and Third Quartos substitute *Or* for *Are* (probably a mere misprint) and place a comma after *generous*. If the Folio reading be accepted, *chief* must be treated as a substantive, meaning "eminence." Collier's substitution of *choice* for *chief* is unconvincing. The simplest change is to omit *of a* (improving the metre) and retain the comma of the Quartos after *generous*; *chief in that* would thus become adverbial, "chiefly in that regard."

77 *husbandry*] thrift, economy.

81 *season this*] ripen this counsel in due season.

83 *invites*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos wrongly read *inuests*, which Theobald defends, explaining it "presses upon."

*tend*] wait (for you). Cf. IV, iii, 45, *infra*, "The associates *tend*."

LAER. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well  
What I have said to you.

OPH. 'T is in my memory lock'd,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAER. Farewell. [Exit.]

POL. What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPH. So please you, something touching the Lord  
Hamlet.

POL. Marry, well bethought: 90  
'T is told me, he hath very oft of late  
Given private time to you, and you yourself  
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:  
If it be so — as so 't is put on me,  
And that in way of caution — I must tell you,  
You do not understand yourself so clearly  
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.  
What is between you? give me up the truth.

OPH. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders  
Of his affection to me. 100

POL. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green  
girl,  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPH. I do not know, my lord, what I should  
think.

POL. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more  
dearly;

---

94 *put on me*] urged on me.



Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Running it thus — you'll tender me a fool.

OPH. My lord, he hath importuned me with love 110  
In honourable fashion.

POL. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

OPH. And hath given countenance to his speech, my  
lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POL. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,  
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,  
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,  
You must not take for fire. From this time 120  
Be something scanter of your maiden presence;  
Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
Believe so much in him, that he is young,  
And with a larger tether may he walk  
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,  
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,

109 *Running*] Collier's excellent emendation of the Folio reading *Roaming* and the Quarto reading *Wrong*. Theobald preferred *Wringing*.  
*you'll tender me a fool*] *you'll make me cut a foolish figure in the public eye.*

115 *springes . . . woodcocks*] Cf. *Wint. Tale*, IV, iii, 34: "If the *springe* [*i. e.*, snare or trap] hold, the *cock* 's mine." The woodcock was reckoned the most stupid of birds.

122 *entreatments*] conferences, interviews; like the French "*entretien*," conversation.

127 *brokers*] agents; frequently used of panders, procurers of girls for immoral purposes.

Not of that dye which their investments show,  
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds, 130  
 The better to beguile. This is for all:  
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,  
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
 Look to 't, I charge you: come your ways.  
 OPH. I shall obey, my lord. [Exeunt.

## SCENE IV — THE PLATFORM

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS*

HAM. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HOR. It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAM. What hour now?

HOR. I think it lacks of twelve.

MAR. No, it is struck.

HOR. Indeed? I heard it not: it then draws near the  
 season

---

128 *that dye*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *the eye*; "eye" is occasionally used for "tint," "hue."

*investments*] garments, outward vesture.

130 *bawds*] Theobald's emendation of the reading of all the original editions, *bonds*, which may be defended on the ground that the word might well mean the stringent ties of affianced lovers.

133 *slander any moment leisure*] disgrace any momentary leisure. Thus the Folios and the Second and Third Quartos.

2 *eager*] biting.

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.*]

What doth this mean, my lord?

HAM. The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, 10  
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

HOR. Is it a custom?

HAM. Ay, marry, is 't:  
But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase 20  
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes  
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So, oft it chances in particular men,

8 *wake*] hold revel.

*rouse*] carouse. See note on I, ii, 127, *supra*, and cf. II, i, 58, *infra*.

9 *Keeps wassail . . . reels*] Keeps carousal or festival of drink, and dances the drunken, boisterous dance called "the up-spring" (which was familiar in Germany under the name of Hüpfauf).

17-38 *This . . . scandal*] This passage is omitted from the First Quarto and the Folios. It is only found in the Second and later Quartos.

17-20 *east . . . addition*] exposes us to slander and censure far and wide: they call us drunkards, and "likening us to swine" stain our reputation or good name. For *addition* [*i. e.*, title] cf. II, i, 47, *infra*.

22 *attribute*] repute. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, II, iii, 125: "much *attribute* he hath."

That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
 As, in their birth, — wherein they are not guilty,  
 Since nature cannot choose his origin, —  
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
 The form of plausive manners, that these men, — 30  
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star, —  
 Their virtues else — be they as pure as grace,  
 As infinite as man may undergo —  
 Shall in the general censure take corruption  
 From that particular fault: the dram of eale  
 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
 To his own scandal.

24 *vicious mole of nature*] some small natural disfigurement.

27 *o'ergrowth of some complexion*] excessive growth of some disposition or temperament.

30 *plausive*] praiseworthy, entitled to applause.

32 *Being . . . star*] Being a badge bestowed by nature, or the accident of fortune, *i. e.*, the effect of astrological influence.

33 *Their virtues*] Theobald's correction of the old reading *His* virtues.

36-38 *the dram . . . scandal*] Thus the Second and Third Quartos. The later Quartos substitute *ease* for *eale*. Neither *eale* nor *of a doubt* can be quite satisfactorily explained, though the general sense is obviously that of St. Paul's maxim, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," *i. e.*, the least alloy of baseness negatives the worth of the whole substance, involving it all in discredit. More than forty changes have been suggested. *Eale*, for which *bale* is often substituted, is doubtless a misspelling of "evil." *Doth . . . of a doubt* probably means "infect . . . with doubt or suspicion," *doth* being used as "do" in "To do in slander" (*i. e.*, infect with slander) in *Meas. for Meas.*,

*Enter Ghost*

HOR. Look, my lord, it comes !

HAM. Angels and ministers of grace defend us !  
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 40  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
 Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
 That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!  
 Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
 Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
 Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,  
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws, 50  
 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
 That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,  
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature

I, iii, 43. *Often dout* (*i. e.*, extinguish, efface) has been unconvincingly suggested for *of a doubt*; "*dout*" being not unfamiliar in this sense in provincial usage. *His own scandal* is, of course, "*its own scandal*."

43 *questionable*] inclined to conversation, willing to be conversed with.

Cf. *As You Like It*, III, ii, 347: "an *unquestionable* spirit," *i. e.*, a spirit averse to conversation.

47 *canonized bones*] bones consecrated by canonical rites of burial; "canonized" is accented on the second syllable.

53 *the glimpses*] places illumined by the glimmering light.

54 *we fools of nature*] Thus the old editions. The syntax strictly requires *us* for *we*; but the irregularity is accounted for by Hamlet's agitation. "Fools of nature" means men who are the sport of their own weakness and limitations.

So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[*Ghost beckons Hamlet.*]

HOR. It beckons you to go away with it,  
As if it some impartment did desire  
To you alone.

MAR. Look, with what courteous action 60  
It waves you to a more removed ground:  
But do not go with it.

HOR. No, by no means.

HAM. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HOR. Do not, my lord.

HAM. Why, what should be the fear?  
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?  
It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

HOR. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff 70  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? think of it:  
The very place puts toys of desperation,

59 *impartment*] communication, disclosure.

61 *waves*] beckons.

65 *a pin's fee*] the worth of a pin.

73 *deprive your sovereignty of reason*] dethrone your sovereign reason,  
deprive you of control of your reason.

75 *toys of desperation*] fancies of despair.

## ACT I

[ 38 ]

## SCENE V—ANOTHER PART OF THE PLATFORM

*Enter Ghost and HAMLET*

HAM. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

GHOST. Mark me.

HAM. I will.

GHOST. My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

HAM. Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

HAM. Speak; I am bound to hear.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAM. What?

GHOST. I am thy father's spirit;  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night, 10  
And for the day confined to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part  
And each particular hair to stand an end,

---

19 *an end*] on end. Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto,  
which reads *on end*.



Like quills upon the fretful porpentine : 20  
 But this eternal blazon must not be  
 To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!  
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love —

HAM. O God!

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAM. Murder!

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is,  
 But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAM. Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift  
 As meditation or the thoughts of love, 30  
 May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST. I find thee apt;  
 And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
 That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,  
 Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:  
 'T is given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
 Is by a forged process of my death

20 *porpentine*] a common Elizabethan spelling of "porcupine."

21 *this eternal blazon*] the revelation of the mysteries of eternity. Elsewhere "eternal" is used by Shakespeare for "infernal," *i. e.*, horrible. Cf. *Jul. Caes.*, I, ii, 160: "The *eternal* devil," and *Othello*, IV, ii, 131.

32-33 *the fat weed . . . wharf*] These lines are doubtless a reminiscence of Ovid's *Metam.*, XI, 602 *seq.*, where "rivus aquæ Lethes" is said to flow about the cave of sleep, while "fecunda papavera" (*i. e.*, prolific poppies) grow luxuriantly about its entry. In Golding's translation "the river of forgetfulness" is thus associated with the growth of "poppy store With seeded heads and other *weeds* innumerable more." *Fat* may easily be a rendering of "fecunda" in Ovid's "fecunda papavera." *Wharf* can only mean "bank" or "shore."

37 *forged process*] falsified report.

Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

HAM. O my prophetic soul! 40  
My uncle!

GHOST. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts, —  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce! -- won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:  
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!  
From me, whose love was on that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage; and to decline 50  
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine!

But virtue, as it never will be moved,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed  
And prey on garbage.

But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon, 60  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,

---

40 *my prophetic soul*] Cf. I, ii, 255, *supra*: "I doubt some foul play." Cf.

*Sonnet*, cvii, 1; and Euripides' *Andromache*, 1075, *πρόμαντις θυμός*.

52 *To those of mine*] Compared to mine.

61 *secure*] unguarded, unsuspecting. "Secure" is accented on the first syllable.

With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
 And in the porches of my ears did pour  
 The leperous distilment; whose effect  
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
 That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
 The natural gates and alleys of the body;  
 And with a sudden vigour it doth posset  
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine; 70  
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
 All my smooth body.  
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:  
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled;  
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account

62 *hebenon*] Thus the Folios. All the Quartos read *hebona*. Neither word is known elsewhere. A misprint for "henbane," the familiar poison, is usually suspected. According to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.*, xxv, 4), an oil made of henbane seed, if dropped in the ear, confused the brain. On the other hand, Marlowe in *The Jew of Malta*, III, iv, 96, includes in a list of poisons "the juice of Hebon," where Hebon is usually explained as a name of the yew-tree, all the properties of which were reckoned poisonous. Probably Shakespeare had the yew-tree in his mind.

68 *posset*] curdle. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *possesse*.

69 *eager*] sour, like the French "aigre."

71 *a most . . . bark'd about*] instantaneously a scurf formed a scab about.

77 *Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled*] without having received the sacrament, unprepared, without extreme unction. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, III, i, 61: "appointment," *i. e.*, preparation. So "fitted" (*Meas. for Meas.*, II, iv, 40) means "provided with religious consolation."

With all my imperfections on my head:  
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible! 80  
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
 Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven,  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire: 90  
 Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [Exit.

HAM. O all you host of heaven! O earth! what  
 else?  
 And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my  
 heart;  
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!  
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
 Yea, from the table of my memory  
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

80 *O, horrible! . . . horrible!*] All the early editions give this line to the Ghost. But Garrick and some of his successors transfer it to Hamlet.

81 *nature*] natural affection.

83 *luxury*] lust.

90 *'gins to pale his uneffectual fire*] the glow-worm, in the glimmering dawn, begins to decrease its light, so as to be scarcely visible.

97 *this distracted globe*] Hamlet refers to his own head.

98 *table*] tablet. Cf. line 107, *infra*.

All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, 100  
 That youth and observation copied there;  
 And thy commandment all alone shall live  
 Within the book and volume of my brain,  
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!  
 O most pernicious woman!  
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
 My tables, — meet it is I set it down,  
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. [*Writing.*  
 So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word; 110  
 It is "Adieu, adieu! remember me."  
 I have sworn 't.

HOR. }  
 MAR. } [*Within*] My lord, my lord!

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS*

MAR. Lord Hamlet!  
 HOR. Heaven secure him!  
 HAM. So be it!  
 MAR. Illo, ho, ho, my lord!  
 HAM. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.  
 MAR. How is 't, my noble lord?  
 HOR. What news, my lord?  
 HAM. O, wonderful!

100 *All saws . . . past*] All maxims, all shapes, all past impressions.

107 *tables*] tablets, memorandum books. Cf. line 98, *supra*.

110 *Now to my word*] Now to frame a motto, a cue (to guide future action).

115 *Illo, ho, ho*] A form of hallo.

116 *Hillo . . . come*] A cry of a falconer to his bird.

HOR. Good my lord, tell it.

HAM. No; you will reveal it.

HOR. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MAR. Nor I, my lord. 120

HAM. How say you, then; would heart of man once  
think it?

But you'll be secret?

HOR. }  
MAR. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.

HAM. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark  
But he's an arrant knave.

HOR. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the  
grave  
To tell us this.

HAM. Why, right; you are i' the right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:  
You, as your business and desire shall point you;  
For every man hath business and desire, 130  
Such as it is; and for my own poor part,  
Look you, I'll go pray.

HOR. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAM. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, faith, heartily.

HOR. There's no offence, my lord.

HAM. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,

127 *circumstance*] circumlocution, ceremony. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, i, 90:  
"out of [*i. e.*, without] *circumstance*."

136 *by Saint Patrick*] St. Patrick is probably referred to here as the  
traditional "keeper of purgatory," who has unexpiated crimes under  
his special observation.

And much offence too. Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:  
For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends, 140  
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

HOR. What is 't, my lord? we will.

HAM. Never make known what you have seen to-  
night.

HOR. }  
MAR. } My lord, we will not.

HAM. Nay, but swear 't.

HOR. In faith,

My lord, not I.

MAR. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAM. Upon my sword.

MAR. We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAM. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAM. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,  
true-penny? 150

Come on: you hear this fellow in the cellarage:

Consent to swear.

HOR. Propose the oath, my lord.

HAM. Never to speak of this that you have seen,  
Swear by my sword.

138 *honest*] genuine.

148 *Indeed . . . indeed*] Swear definitely upon the cross of my sword.  
Previously they have only sworn "in faith" verbally, on their  
conscience.

150 *true-penny*] honest fellow.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAM. Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.  
Come hither, gentlemen,  
And lay your hands again upon my sword:  
Never to speak of this that you have heard,  
Swear by my sword.

160

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAM. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth  
so fast?

A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

HOR. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAM. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

170

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on,

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

156 *Hic et ubique*] Here and everywhere. The snatch of Latinity is due to the common belief that Latin was the language with which ghosts were most familiar. Cf. I, i, 42, *supra*.

163 *pioner*] The word is often used for a working engineer, or "navvy" in attendance on an army.

164 *wondrous strange*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, V, i, 59, and *3 Hen. VI*, II, i, 33.

165 *give it welcome*] receive it without questioning, as you would a guest.

167 *your*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *our*, which gives poorer sense.

172 *antic*] fantastic.



As "Well, well, we know," or "We could, an if we  
would,"

Or "If we list to speak," or "There be, an if they  
might,"

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me: this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you, 180  
Swear.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAM. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear.*] So,  
gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you:

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

May do, to express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right! 190

Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*]

178 *giving out*] hint, intimation.

*to note*] Thus the early editions. Theobald read *denote*. The grammar is confused; *to* is superfluous; *note* follows *never shall* (line 173).

186 *friending to you*] friendship for you.



## ACT SECOND — SCENE I

### A ROOM IN POLONIUS'S HOUSE

*Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO*

POLONIUS



GIVE HIM THIS MONEY  
and these notes, Reynaldo.

REY. I will, my lord.

POL. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,  
Before you visit him, to make inquire  
Of his behaviour.

REY. My lord, I did intend it.

POL. Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,  
Inquire me first what Danskers  
are in Paris,

And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,  
What company, at what expense, and finding

(stage direction) *Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO*] Thus the Folios. The Second and later Quartos read *Enter Old POLONIUS, with his man or two*. The First Quarto has *Enter CORAMBIS and MONTANO*. POLONIUS is called CORAMBIS, and REYNALDO is called MONTANO all through the First Quarto.

By this encompassment and drift of question 10  
 That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
 Than your particular demands will touch it:  
 Take you, as 't were, some distant knowledge of him,  
 As thus, "I know his father and his friends,  
 And in part him:" do you mark this, Reynaldo?

REY. Ay, very well, my lord.

POL. "And in part him; but," you may say, "not well:  
 But if 't be he I mean, he's very wild,  
 Addicted so and so;" and there put on him  
 What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank 20  
 As may dishonour him; take heed of that;  
 But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips  
 As are companions noted and most known  
 To youth and liberty.

REY. As gaming, my lord.

POL. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,  
 Drabbing: you may go so far.

REY. My lord, that would dishonour him.

POL. Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.

4 *to make inquire*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *you make inquiry*.

7 *Danskens*] Danes, formed from the Danish Dansk, *i. e.*, Denmark.

8 *keep*] lodge, dwell.

10 *encompassment and drift of question*] circuitous method in framingspeech.

11-12 *come you . . . touch it*] you will get far nearer the point than more direct inquiry will bring you. Polonius repeats the same idea at line 66: "By indirections find directions out."

19-20 *there put on him . . . please*] credit him with any tale you care to invent.

25 *fencing*] fencing was in ill-repute, and was associated with a tendency to break the peace on small provocation.

28 *season it in the charge*] qualify the accusation.

You must not put another scandal on him,  
 That he is open to incontinency; 30  
 That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly  
 That they may seem the taints of liberty,  
 The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
 A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
 Of general assault

REY. But, my good lord, —

POL. Wherefoie should you do this?

REY. Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

POL. Marry, sir, here's my drift,  
 And I believe it is a fetch of warrant:  
 You laying these slight sullies on my son,  
 As 't were a thing a little soil'd i' the working, 40  
 Mark you,  
 Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
 Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes  
 The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured  
 He closes with you in this consequence;

---

30 *incontinency*] habitual incontinency, which Polonius distinguishes from  
 “drabbing” (line 26).

31 *quaintly*] cleverly.

34 *unreclaimed*] untamed, unbridled.

35 *Of general assault*] To which men generally are liable.

38 *a fetch of warrant*] a device to be depended on. Thus the Folios. The  
 Quartos read *a fetch of wit*.

42 *Your party in converse*] The person you are conversing with. “Con-  
 verse” is accented on the second syllable.

43 *in the prenominate crimes*] in regard to the aforesaid crimes.

45 *He closes . . . consequence*] He expresses his agreement with you in the  
 following fashion.

"Good sir," or so, or "friend," or "gentleman,"  
According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.

REY. Very good, my lord.

POL. And then, sir, does he this — he does — what  
was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say  
something: where did I leave? 51

REY. At "closes in the consequence," at "friend or  
so," and "gentleman."

POL. At "closes in the consequence," ay, marry;  
He closes with you thus: "I know the gentleman;  
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,  
Or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as you say,  
There was a' gaming, there o'ertook in 's rouse,  
There falling out at tennis:" or perchance,  
"I saw him enter such a house of sale," 60  
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:  
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

47 *the addition*] the title. Cf. I, iv, 20, *supra*.

49–51 *And then . . . leave?*] Malone first printed this speech as prose.

Polonius is growing too incoherent to follow metrical rule.

52–53 *At "closes . . . gentleman"*] The Globe editors treat this speech as  
prose. The verse halts very much in the original editions.

55 *with you*] Thus the Folios. The Second and later Quartos omit the words.

58 *o'ertook in 's rouse*] overcome in drink, intoxicated. For "rouse" cf.  
I, ii, 127, and I, iv, 8, *supra*.

64 *of wisdom and of reach*] by wisdom and far-reaching policy. "Reach"  
is similarly used in North's *Plutarch*, ed. 1595, p. 202: "But as for  
Fabius, he laide many baitees for him, and did what he could by all  
the skill and *reach* he had." (W. J. Craig.)

With windlasses and with assays of bias,  
 By indirections find directions out:  
 So, by my former lecture and advice,  
 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

REY. My lord, I have.

POL. God be wi' ye; fare ye well.

REY. Good my lord!

70

POL. Observe his inclination in yourself.

REY. I shall, my lord,

POL. And let him ply his music.

REY. Well, my lord.

POL. Farewell! [Exit Reynaldo.]

*Enter OPHELIA*

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

OPH. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

POL. With what, i' the name of God?

OPH. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,

Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,

No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,

Ungarter'd and down-gyved to his ancle;

80

Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,

65-66 *With windlasses . . . directions out*] With subtle windings and circuitous efforts, by indirect methods, discover direct or certain information. "Windlass" is often thus used in Golding's translation of Ovid; "bias" is a technical term in the game of bowls for the leaden weight on one side of the bowl, which makes it describe a curve when it is set rolling.

68 *You have me*] You take my meaning.

71 *in yourself*] by your own observation.

72 *ply his music*] play his own game.

78 *unbraced*] unbuttoned.

80 *down-gyved . . . ancle*] loosely hanging down at his ankle like fetters.

And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

POL. Mad for thy love?

OPH. My lord, I do not know,  
But truly I do fear it.

POL. What said he?

OPH. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face 90  
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being: that done, he lets me go:  
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;  
For out o' doors he went without their helps,  
And to the last bended their light on me. 100

POL. Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.  
This is the very ecstasy of love;  
Whose violent property fordoes itself  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings  
As oft as any passion under heaven  
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.  
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPH. No, my good lord, but, as you did command,

---

103 *fordoes itself*] destroys itself, does itself injury.

I did repel his letters and denied  
His access to me.

POL.                    That hath made him mad. 110  
I am sorry that with better heed and judgement  
I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle  
And meant to wreck thee; but beshrew my jealousy!  
By heaven, it is as proper to our age  
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions  
As it is common for the younger sort  
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:  
This must be known; which, being kept close, might move  
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.  
Come. [Exeunt. 120

## SCENE II—A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,  
and Attendants*

KING. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!  
Moreover that we much did long to see you,

112 *quoted him*] observed him, interpreted his meaning. The Quartos  
read *coted*, no uncommon form of the same word.

113 *beshrew my jealousy*] curse my suspicion.

115 *cast beyond*] overshoot, overreach.

118-119 *which, being . . . love*] The words are strained. The general  
meaning is that more trouble may come from hiding the fact of  
Hamlet's amorous passion than anger (on the part of Hamlet and  
the king), from disclosing it.

120 *Come*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios omit the word.

1 *Rosencrantz*] Thus Malone. The Quartos read *Rosencrans*, and the  
First Folio *Rosincrance*.

2 *Moreover that*] Besides that.



The need we have to use you did provoke  
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,  
 Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man  
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
 So much from the understanding of himself,  
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both, 10  
 That, being of so young days brought up with him  
 And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour,  
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
 Some little time: so by your companies  
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather  
 So much as from occasion you may glean,  
 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,  
 That open'd lies within our remedy.

QUEEN. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you,  
 And sure I am two men there are not living 20  
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you  
 To show us so much gentry and good will  
 As to expend your time with us a while  
 For the supply and profit of our hope,  
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
 As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties  
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,

---

10 *dream*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *deem*.

12 *so neighbour'd . . . haviour*] so sympathetically associated with his  
 temperament or disposition in youth. Cf. line 283, *infra*.

22 *gentry*] courtesy, kindness.

24 *For the supply . . . hope*] For the adequate fulfilment of our intentions.

Put your dread pleasures more into command  
Than to entreaty.

GUIL. But we both obey,  
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent 30  
To lay our service freely at your feet,  
To be commanded.

KING. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosen-  
crantz:

And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,  
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUIL. Heavens make our presence and our practices  
Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN. Ay, amen!

*[Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some Attendants.]*

*Enter* POLONIUS

POL. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, 40  
Are joyfully returned.

KING. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POL. Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,  
I hold my duty as I hold my soul,  
Both to my God and to my gracious king:  
And I do think, or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath used to do, that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

---

30 *in the full bent*] to the full extent, a metaphor from bending the bow in archery.

KING. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear. 50

POL. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;  
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

KING. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit Polonius.*]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found  
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

QUEEN. I doubt it is no other but the main;  
His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

KING. Well, we shall sift him.

*Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS*

Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLT. Most fair return of greetings and desires. 60

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd

To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,

But better look'd into, he truly found

It was against your highness: whereat grieved,

That so his sickness, age and impotence

Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests

On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys,

Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine

Makes vow before his uncle never more 70

To give the assay of arms against your majesty.

---

56 *the main*] the main cause, the plain fact.

61 *Upon our first*] *sc.*, request.

63 *the Polack*] the Pole, Poles, men of Poland. Cf. I, i, 63, *supra*.

67 *borne in hand*] deluded, deceived.

71 *assay*] trial.

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee  
 And his commission to employ those soldiers,  
 So levied as before, against the Polack:  
 With an entreaty, herein further shown, [*Giving a paper.*  
 That it might please you to give quiet pass  
 Through your dominions for this enterprise,  
 On such regards of safety and allowance  
 As therein are set down.

KING. It likes us well, 80  
 And at our more consider'd time we'll read,  
 Answer, and think upon this business.  
 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour:  
 Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:  
 Most welcome home! [*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*

POL. This business is well ended.  
 My liege, and madam, to expostulate  
 What majesty should be, what duty is,  
 Why day is day, night night, and time is time,  
 Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.  
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit 90  
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
 I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:  
 Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,

---

73 *three thousand*] Thus the Folios and the First Quarto. The other Quartos read *three score thousand*.

79 *regards . . . allowance*] conditions of safety and terms of agreement.

80 *It likes us*] It pleases us.

81 *at our more consider'd time*] when we have more time for reflection.

86-87 *expostulate . . . should be*] expound the character of royalty or the conditions of the kingly state.

What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?

But let that go.

QUEEN. More matter, with less art.

POL. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.  
That he is mad, 't is true: 't is true 't is pity,  
And pity 't is 't is true: a foolish figure;  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.

Mad let us grant him then: and now remains 100

That we find out the cause of this effect,

Or rather say, the cause of this defect,

For this effect defective comes by cause:

Thus it remains and the remainder thus.

Perpend.

I have a daughter, — have while she is mine, —

Who in her duty and obedience, mark,

Hath given me this: now gather and surmise. [*Reads.*]

“To the celestial, and my soul’s idol, the most beautified  
Ophelia,” —

That’s an ill phrase, a vile phrase; “beautified” is a vile 110  
phrase: but you shall hear. Thus: [*Reads.*]

“In her excellent white bosom, these,” &c.

---

105 *Perpend*] consider: an affected word like “expostulate” at line 86, *supra*.

109 *beautified*] Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto, which reads *beautiful*. But “beautified” is not uncommon in amatory correspondence of the day.

112 *In her excellent . . . &c.*] Thus Malone. The early editions confuse the punctuation, and the Folio makes these words part of Polonius’ comment. Letters of the day often opened with the name of the addressee, followed by the word “these.” The present text is supported by *Two Gent.*, III, i, 248–250: “Thy letters may be here, though thou

QUEEN. Came this from Hamlet to her?

POL. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

[*Reads.*]

“Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.

“O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

121

“Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this  
machine is to him, HAMLET.”

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me;  
And more above, hath his solicitings,  
As they fell out by time, by means and place,  
All given to mine ear.

KING. But how hath she  
Received his love?

POL. What do you think of me?

KING. As of a man faithful and honourable.

POL. I would fain prove so. But what might you  
think,

130

When I had seen this hot love on the wing, —  
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,  
Before my daughter told me, — what might you,  
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,

---

art hence; Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd Even *in the milk-white bosom of thy love.*”

122 *machine*] corporeal frame.

If I had play'd the desk or table-book,  
 Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;  
 What might you think? No, I went round to work,  
 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
 "Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;  
 140 This must not be:" and then I prescripts gave her,  
 That she should lock herself from his resort,  
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.  
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;  
 And he repulsed, a short tale to make,  
 Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
 Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
 Thence to a lightness, and by this declension  
 Into the madness wherein now he raves  
 And all we mourn for. 150

KING. Do you think this?

QUEEN. It may be, very like.

POL. Hath there been such a time, I'd fain know that,  
 That I have positively said "'t is so,"  
 When it proved otherwise?

135 *play'd . . . table-book*] played the silent recipient of the knowledge.

136 *Or given . . . dumb*] Or given my heart a sign (to be) mute and dumb. "Winking" is often used by Shakespeare in the sense of "shutting the eyes"; but here it is employed in the more modern sense of "giving a clandestine sign."

138 *round*] directly.

140 *out of thy star*] out of thy sphere. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, v, 128: "*In my stars I am above thee.*"

141 *prescripts*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *precepts*.

147 *watch*] state of sleeplessness.

148 *lightness*] lightheadedness.

KING. Not that I know.

POL. [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*] Take this from this, if this be otherwise:

If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is h'd, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.

KING. How may we try it further?

POL. You know, sometimes he walks four hours  
together  
Here in the lobby.

QUEEN. So he does, indeed.

160

POL. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:  
Be you and I behind an arras then;  
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,  
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,  
Let me be no assistant for a state,  
But keep a farm and carters.

KING. We will try it.

QUEEN. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes  
reading.

POL. Away, I do beseech you, both away:  
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

158 *Within the centre*] In the interior of the earth. The earth was regarded as the centre of the universe.

159 *four*] "Four" was in constant use when some number of indefinitely large size was intended. Cf. V, i, 263, *infra*: "*forty* thousand brothers."

162 *arras*] tapestry hangings, which left ample hiding space between them and the wall.

167 *poor wretch*] a no uncommon term of endearment.

169 *I'll board*] I'll accost.



---

*Enter HAMLET, reading*

O, give me leave: how does my good Lord Hamlet? 170

HAM. Well, God-a-mercy.

POL. Do you know me, my lord?

HAM. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

POL. Not I, my lord.

HAM. Then I would you were so honest a man.

POL. Honest, my lord!

HAM. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

POL. That's very true, my lord.

HAM. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, 180  
being a god kissing carrion — Have you a daughter?

POL. I have, my lord.

HAM. Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive, — friend, look to 't.

POL. [*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. — What do you read, my lord? 190

---

173 *a fishmonger*] Hamlet probably intends to hint that Polonius is angling or fishing for secrets. But "fishmonger" is sometimes loosely used of one going after women.

181 *god kissing carrion*] Warburton's ingenious correction of the original reading *good kissing carrion*. The latter is intelligible; the dead dog being represented as carrion, which is good to be kissed, *i. e.*, alluring to the sun's reproductive power, and apt to breed (maggots) freely.

186 *How say you?*] What do you mean?

HAM. Words, words, words.

POL. What is the matter, my lord?

HAM. Between who?

POL. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

HAM. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

203

POL. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. — Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAM. Into my grave.

POL. Indeed, that's out of the air. [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. — My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

213

HAM. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that

193 *Between who?*] Hamlet pretends to understand by "matter," "some question in dispute."

195 *rogue*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *slave*.

202 *old as I am*] Hamlet is not talking absolute nonsense here. He uses "old" as denoting age in a general sense; hence "old as I am" means "of my years."

207 *pregnant*] apt.

I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

POL. Fare you well, my lord.

HAM. These tedious old fools!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

POL. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

ROS. [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir! [*Exit Polonius.*]

GUIL. My honoured lord! 221

ROS. My most dear lord!

HAM. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?

ROS. As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUIL. Happy, in that we are not over-happy;  
On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAM. Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROS. Neither, my lord. 230

HAM. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

GUIL. Faith, her privates we.

HAM. In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What's the news?

ROS. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

HAM. Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither? 240

226 *indifferent*] average.

238-268 *Let me . . . attended*] This passage is in the Folios only. The Quartos omit it.

GUIL. Prison, my lord!

HAM. Denmark 's a prison.

ROS. Then is the world one.

HAM. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

ROS. We think not so, my lord.

HAM. Why, 'then 't is none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison. 250

ROS. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 't is too narrow for your mind.

HAM. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

GUIL. Which dreams indeed are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

HAM. A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROS. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. 261

HAM. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

ROS. }  
GUIL. } We'll wait upon you.

244 *confines*] places of confinement.

257 *the very substance of the ambitious*] the substantial rewards of ambition.

262-263 *Then are . . . shadows*] In this case the men who have nothing are the real substance, and the people who have everything, kings,—and the great men who hold their heads up high—are ineffectual shadows.

HAM. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROS. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion. 270

HAM. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUIL. What should we say, my lord?

HAM. Why, anything, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you. 280

ROS. To what end, my lord?

HAM. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

ROS. [*Aside to Guil.*] What say you?

---

266 *No such matter*] No such thing, nothing of the kind.

268 *most dreadfully attended*] Hamlet is thinking of his bad dreams and disturbing memories, rather than of his household attendants.

273 *too dear a halfpenny*] too dear at a halfpenny; are worth less.

283-284 *the consonancy . . . youth*] the harmony attending our relations in youth. The two visitors have already been mentioned at line 12, *supra*, as "so neighbour'd to his youth."

285-286 *a better . . . withal*] a more skilful pleader could urge on you.

HAM. [*Aside*] Nay then, I have an eye of you. — If you love me, hold not off. 290

GUIL. My lord, we were sent for.

HAM. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. 309

ROS. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAM. Why did you laugh then, when I said “man delights not me”?

ROS. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from

---

289 *I have an eye of you*] I have an eye on you, I am watching you closely.

292–294 *I will tell . . . feather*] Hamlet is unwilling to tempt his old friends to a breach of the king’s confidence. “Discovery” means “disclosure.”

304 *express*] expressive.

you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

HAM. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere, and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't. What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city. 325

HAM. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

315 *coted*] came up with, overtook.

320 *the humorous man*] the actor of "humourist" or character parts, like Falconbridge or Mercutio, whose whimsicality is commonly characterised by a quick temper.

321-322 *the clown . . . sere*] This is found only in the Folios.

*whose lungs . . . sere*] whose lungs are easily tickled, readily provoked to mirth. "Sere" or "sear" is a technical term in gunnery for the mechanism which grips the trigger. When the "sere" is "tickle," *i. e.*, sensitive to the slightest touch, the gun goes off almost spontaneously.

322-323 *the lady . . . halt for 't*] the lady shall pronounce all the licentious talk written for her, or her omissions shall make the metre halt.

326 *travel*] tour in the provinces.

328-329 *I think their inhibition . . . innovation*] I think their exclusion from the London stage is due to the recent innovation in public taste. Reference is made here and in the passages which follow to an incident in the contemporary history of the London stage. A company of boy-actors, known as the "Children of the Chapel" (many of the

HAM. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

ROS. No, indeed, are they not.

HAM. How comes it? do they grow rusty? 333

ROS. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither. 340

HAM. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no

youths being choristers from the Chapel Royal) had during 1602-3 acquired extraordinary popularity by their performances at the Blackfriars Theatre, and the theatre-going public had for the time neglected performances by the adult actors. The matter is more plainly, though more curtly, explained in the First Quarto, 1603, where it is said of "the misfortunes of the tragedians of the city," that "noveltie carries it away, For the principal publike audience that Came to them are turned to private (*i.e.*, amateur) playes And to the humours of children."

333-358 *How . . . load too*] This passage only appears in the Folios.

334-340 *Nay, their endeavour . . . thither*] Nay, the adult actors maintain their average capacity. But there is a brood of children, little chits (young hawks fresh from the nest), that shrilly shout down controversy, and are vociferously applauded for their noise. These children are all the fashion and so abuse the regular actors, that grown-up gallants, the fashionable patrons of the playhouse, are afraid of lampoons (from writers for the children) and scarcely venture inside the theatres.

342-347 *how are they escoted . . . succession?*] Whence do they get their pay or shot? will they pursue the calling of actor only so long as their boys' voices are unbroken? will they not say afterwards if they should



longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, — as it is most like, if their means are no better, — their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession? 347

ROS. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAM. Is't possible?

GUIL. O, there has been much throwing about of brains. 355

HAM. Do the boys carry it away?

ROS. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

HAM. It is not very strange; for my uncle is king

grow up to become ordinary adult actors, as they are very likely to do, if they have no better means of getting a livelihood, that their literary champions do them ill-service by putting into their mouths abusive speech of the profession to which they are themselves to succeed?

348 *to do*] ado, bustle.

349–352 *the nation . . . question*] the public likes to incite the two parties to controversy: no money was offered for the plot or story of a play unless the dramatic poet (whose services were now chiefly requisitioned by the juvenile actors) attacked in his dialogue the unpopular adult players. “Argument” (*i. e.*, plot) is similarly used III, ii, 227, *infra*.

354–355 *throwing about of brains*] bandying of wits.

356 *carry it away*] carry all before them.

357–358 *Hercules and his load*] Hercules bearing the globe on his back was the sign of the Globe Theatre. Allusion is made here to the temporary decay in that playhouse's fortunes.

of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece, for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

GUIL. There are the players.

365

HAM. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outwards, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUIL. In what, my dear lord?

HAM. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

375

360 *make mows*] make insulting grimaces.

362 *his picture in little*] his miniature.

367-368 *the appurtenance . . . ceremony*] the adjuncts of welcome are the formal modes of courtesy.

368-369 *let me comply . . . garb*] let me make compliment of courtesy — observe the formalities of courtesy — with you in this fashion. For “comply” in this sense, cf. V, ii, 182, *infra*.

369 *my extent*] my courteous advance, condescension.

371 *entertainment*] mere board and lodging without the graces of hospitality.

374 *mad north-north-west*] scarcely perceptibly mad; “north-north-west” implies a very slight breeze.

374-375 *when the wind . . . handsaw*] Ray (*Proverbs*, 1768, p. 296) quotes the expression as implying extreme stupidity: “He knows not a hawk from a handshaw.” “Handshaw” is a dialectic form of heron-shaw or heron-sew, a young heron. Spenser, *Faerie-Queene*, VI,

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*Re-enter* POLONIUS

POL. Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAM. Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

ROS. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child. 381

HAM. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 't was so, indeed.

POL. My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAM. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, —

POL. The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAM. Buz, buz!

POL. Upon my honour, — 390

HAM. Then came each actor on his ass, —

POL. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-

---

vii, 9, notices heron-shaw as the common prey of a falcon. A southerly wind was a favourable condition for the sport of hawking.

380 *Happily*] Perhaps.

382-383 *You say right . . . indeed*] Hamlet is misleading Polonius as to what they have been talking about.

389 *Buz, buz!*] a contemptuous interjection implying that the news is stale.

391 *on his ass*] Hamlet is quizzing Polonius' asseveration, "Upon my honour."

pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

HAM. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

POL. What a treasure had he, my lord?

400

HAM. Why,

“One fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.”

POL. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

HAM. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

POL. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

HAM. Nay, that follows not.

395 *scene individable . . . unlimited*] a piece having throughout “the same scene” and thus preserving unity of place, or a dramatic poem without restrictions of the kind.

395–396 *Seneca . . . Plautus*] Seneca and Plautus were the standard types respectively of tragedy and comedy. Seneca, whose ten tragedies were translated into English as early as 1581, and Plautus, whose *Menaechmi*, the foundation of Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors*, was issued in English in 1595, were much studied, and often acted at Elizabethan universities.

396–397 *For the law . . . liberty*] These words probably mean that the actors were equally excellent in plays obeying the classical law or rules of drama and in farces or romances which were free of the classical convention.

398–413 *O Jephthah . . . like it was*] Hamlet here is quoting snatches of a popular contemporary ballad, called “Jephthah, judge of Israel,” who “had one fair daughter, and no more, whom he loved passing well.” The ballad is printed in Percy’s *Reliques*.

POL. What follows, then, my lord?

HAM. Why,

410

“As by lot, God wot,”

and then you know,

“It came to pass, as most like it was,” —

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more;  
for look, where my abridgement comes.

415

*Enter four or five Players*

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! Why thy face is valanced since I saw thee last; comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a

414 *the first row . . . chanson*] the first stanza of the scriptural song. For *pious chanson*, the reading of the Second and later Quartos, the First Folio reads *Pons Chanson*, which has been unconvincingly interpreted as a slovenly allusion to the French phrase “*chanson du Pont Neuf*,” a common term for a popular ballad.

415 *abridgement comes*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *abridgements come*. “Abridgement” means a dramatic performance, or pastime. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, V, i, 39. Hamlet calls the players at line 518, *infra*, “the abstract and brief chronicles of the time.” He is here punningly suggesting that the entry of the players must cut short his talk with Polonius.

418 *valanced*] fringed or draped with a beard.

420 *your ladyship*] boys or men, it will be remembered, took women’s parts in Shakspeare’s time.

chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see: we'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAY. What speech, my good lord?

427

HAM. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 't was caviare to the general: but it was — as I received it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine — an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallots in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection; but called it an honest

422 *chopine*] a high corked shoe, or thick sole, worn by adult actors, which seems to have been introduced into England from Venice.

422-423 *uncurrent gold . . . ring*] a ring encircled the sovereign's head on contemporary coins, and a crack on the rim which extended to the ring rendered the coin unfit for currency.

424 *like French falconers*] French falconers were famed for their boldness. Every manner of bird was reckoned by them legitimate prey.

426 *a passionate speech*] a speech of feeling or sentiment.

430-431 *'t was caviare to the general*] it was not to the taste of the public at large. For the like use of "general" cf. *Jul. Caes.*, II, i, 12. "Caviare," which is only palatable to English gourmets, is a Russian condiment made of pickled roe of the sturgeon.

432-433 *cried in the top of mine*] overtopped, excelled mine.

435 *sallots*] salads, herbs of piquancy; here, spicy epigrams.

437 *affection*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *affectation*, which is the sense required here.

method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 't was Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see;

443

"The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast," —

It is not so: it begins with "Pyrrhus."

"The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal: head to foot  
Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,

450

439 *handsome than fine*] beautiful than showy.

440 *Æneas' tale to Dido*] The speech which follows is in the turgid and bombastic style of conventional tragic drama in Shakespeare's early days. The precise incident of the Greek Pyrrhus' slaughter of Priam, King of Troy, comes from Virgil's *Æneid*, ii, 438–558. But Shakespeare treats the Virgilian tale with much freedom. Pyrrhus' experience is also narrated, with variations from the Virgilian text, in Marlowe and Nashe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Act II, Sc. i. Although Shakespeare's borrows very few phrases from Marlowe and Nashe's tragedy, he reproduces its sentiments so closely as to suggest that he was parodying it, whether consciously or unconsciously. But it is not necessary to assume that Shakespeare, when inventing this specimen of early tragedy, was moved by a very definite satiric purpose.

444 *th' Hyrcanian beast*] the tiger. See note on *Merch. of Ven.*, II, vii, 41.

451 *gules*] the heraldic term for "red."

*trick'd*] smeared; properly, the heraldic term for "sketched."

Baked and impasted with the parching streets,  
 That lend a tyrannous and a damned light  
 To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,  
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
 Old grandsire Priam seeks."

So, proceed you.

POL. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

462

FIRST PLAY.

"Anon he finds him

Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,  
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
 Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,  
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;  
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,  
 Which was declining on the milky head  
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:  
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
 And like a neutral to his will and matter,

470

453 *Baked and impasted*] caked.

456 *o'er-sized*] covered as with glue.

467-468 *But with the whiff . . . falls*] Cf. Marlowe and Nashe's *Dido*, II, i, 253-254: "Which he disdaining whiskt his sword about, And with the wind thereof the king fell down."

468 *Ilium*] here Priam's palace at Troy.

474 *painted tyrant*] Cf. *Macb.*, V, viii, 25-27: "We'll have thee, as our rarer Monsters are, *Painted* upon a pole, and under-writ, Here may you see the tyrant."

475 *like . . . matter*] like one ignoring both his intention and object.



Did nothing.

But as we often see, against some storm,  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
The bold winds speechless and the orb below  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause  
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars's armour, forged for proof eterne,  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.

480

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,  
In general synod take away her power,  
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven  
As low as to the fiends!

490

POL. This is too long.

HAM. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.  
Prithee, say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or  
he sleeps: say on: come to Hecuba.

FIRST PLAY. "But who, O, who had seen the mobled  
queen —"

HAM. "The mobled queen?"

POL. That's good; "mobled queen" is good.

---

478 *the rack*] a bank of floating cloud.

481 *the region*] the sky, the upper air.

489 *fellies*] the pieces of wood forming the rim of the wheel.

494 *a jig*] a burlesque dialogue in verse; not here in its more ordinary  
sense of a boisterous dance.

496 *mobled*] muffled, veiled. The uncommon word is more often spelt  
"mobbled" or "mabled."

FIRST PLAY. "Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames

With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head 500  
 Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe,  
 About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
 A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up:  
 Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd  
 'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:  
 But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
 When she saw Iyrhus make malicious sport  
 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
 The instant burst of clamour that she made,  
 Unless things mortal move them not at all, 510  
 Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven  
 And passion in the gods."

POL. Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes. Prithee, no more.

HAM. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used, for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live. 520

500 *bisson rheum*] blinding tears. "Bisson" commonly means "half-blind" or "near-sighted."

502 *o'er-teemed*] exhausted with child-bearing.

511 *milch*] moist (as milk). Cf. Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Bk. XIII, line 171: "the *milch* dew." Dryden's *Pref. to Troil. and Cress.* (1679) condemns the extravagance of this whole passage and is especially severe on the absurdity of drawing milk from burning eyes.

512 *passion*] compassion, pity.

517 *bestowed*] lodged.

518 *abstract . . . chronicles of the time*] epitomes of current experience.

POL. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAM. God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

POL. Come, sirs.

HAM. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the Players but the First.*] 530  
Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

FIRST PLAY. Ay, my lord.

HAM. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

FIRST PLAY. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit First Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore. 540

ROS. Good my lord!

HAM. Ay, so, God be wi' ye! [*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*] Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,

---

535 *some . . . lines*] Cf. III, ii, 79, *infra*: "one speech." Whether Hamlet's "dozen or sixteen lines," figure in the fragment of the acted play in Act III, Sc. ii, *infra*, cannot be determined. It has been ingeniously argued that the murderer Lucianus' last speech of six lines in the acted piece (III, ii, 249-254), is the opening passage of Hamlet's interpolation.

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
 That from her working all his visage wann'd;  
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,  
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
 With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing! 550  
 For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
 That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
 And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
 Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
 Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
 The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I, 560  
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
 Upon whose property and most dear life  
 A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?

546 *own*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *whole*. *Conceit* means imagination.

547 *wann'd*] grew wan or pale. Thus the Cambridge editors; the Quartos read *wand*, and the Folios, *warm'd*. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, II, i, 21: "thy *waned* lip," where the Folios read *wand*.

557 *the free*] the innocent. Cf. III, ii, 236: "*free* souls."

561 *peak*] mope. Cf. *Macb.*, I, iii, 23: "*peak* and pine."

562 *John-a-dreams . . . cause*] any dreamer, unready or ineffectual in my cause. "John-a-dreams" may be Shakespeare's own coinage.

565 *defeat*] ruin, destruction.

Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?  
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,  
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?

Ha!

570

'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
I should have fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,  
A scullion!

580

Fie upon 't! foh! About, my brain! Hum, I have  
heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently

---

572-573 *lack gall . . . bitter*] lack the spirit that makes one feel the bitterness of tyranny. The gentleness of pigeons and doves was commonly assigned to the absence from their composition of gall, which was reckoned the source of courage.

574 *region kites*] birds of prey inhabiting the upper air.

575 *Remorseless . . . kindless*] Pitiless . . . unnatural.

579 *father*] The first three Quartos and the Folios omit *father*, which the Fourth Quarto first inserted.

584 *About*] Get to work.

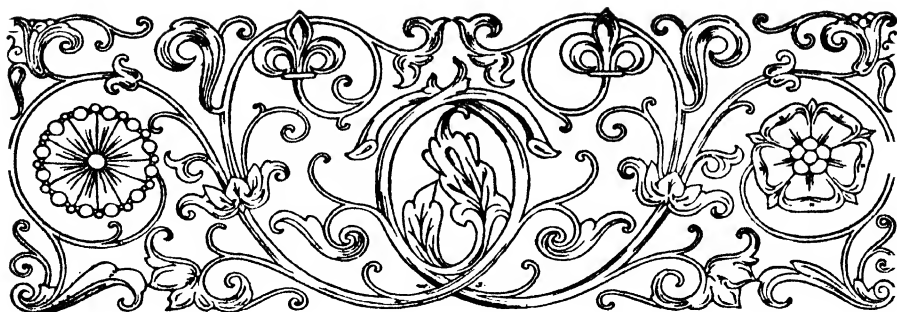
They have proclaim'd their maletactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players 590  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil; and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds  
More relative than this. The play's the thing 600  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [Exit.]

---

590-594 *I'll have . . . course*] Many stories of the detection of crime in this way at a theatre were quoted by Shakespeare's contemporaries. Two are given in Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, 1612. (Shakesp. Soc. ed. pp. 57-59.)

593 *tent . . . blench*] probe . . . flinch.

600 *relative*] pertinent, definite.

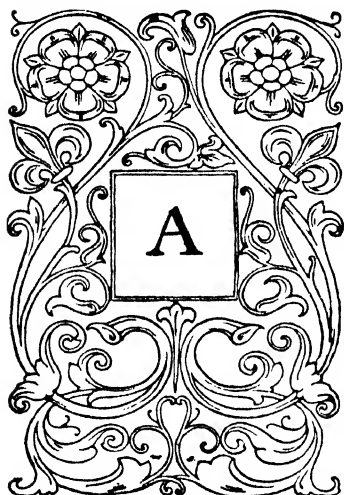


## ACT THIRD — SCENE I

### *A ROOM IN THE CASTLE*

*Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

KING



AND CAN YOU, BY NO  
drift of circumstance  
Get from him why he puts on  
this confusion,  
Grating so harshly all his days  
of quiet  
With turbulent and dangerous  
lunacy?

ROS. He does confess he feels  
himself distracted,  
But from what cause he will by  
no means speak.

GUIL. Nor do we find him  
forward to be sounded;

But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,  
When we would bring him on to some confession  
Of his true state.

QUEEN. Did he receive you well?

10

ROS. Most like a gentleman.

GUIL. But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROS. Niggard of question, but of our demands  
Most free in his reply.

QUEEN. Did you assay him  
To any pastime?

ROS. Madam, it so fell out that certain players  
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him,  
And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
To hear of it: they are about the court,  
And, as I think, they have already order  
This night to play before him.

20

POL. 'Tis most true:  
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
To hear and see the matter.

KING. With all my heart; and it doth much content  
me  
To hear him so inclined.  
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

---

1 *by no drift of circumstance*] by no circuitous method. Cf. II, i, 10,  
*supra*: "*drift of question*."

3 *Grating*] Disturbing.

13 *Niggard of question*] Reluctant to begin the talk. Rosencrantz and  
Guildenstern give a somewhat garbled account of their interview with  
Hamlet in Act II, Sc. ii, and are concealing the awkward fact of his  
discovery that they *were* sent for.

14 *assay*] tempt, challenge.

17 *o'er-raught*] overtook; the preterite of "*o'er reach*." Thus all the early  
editions save the Third Folio, which reads *o'ertook*.



ROS. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

KING. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;  
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 't were by accident, may here 30  
Affront Ophelia:  
Her father and myself, lawful espials,  
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
And gather by him, as he is behaved,  
If 't be the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN. I shall obey you:  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues 40  
Will bring him to his wonted way again,  
To both your honours.

OPH. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*]

POL. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please  
you,  
We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia*] Read on this book;  
That show of such an exercise may colour  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this, —  
'T is too much proved — that with devotion's visage

29 *closely*] secretly.

31 *Affront*] Meet, encounter. Cf. line 34, *infra*.

32 *lawful espials*] legitimate onlookers. Thus the Folios. The words are omitted from the Quartos.

43 *Gracious*] My gracious lord. Cf. IV, vii, 43, *infra*: "High and mighty."

44 *this book*] a book of devotion, as the references below prove.

And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

KING. [*Aside*] O, 't is too true!  
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art, 51  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
O heavy burthen!

POL. I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.  
[*Exeunt King and Polonius.*]

*Enter HAMLET*

HAM. To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 't is nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep; 60

52 *to the thing that helps it*] when compared with the beautifying enamel.

53 *painted word*] falsely coloured word.

56 *To be, or not to be*] To live or commit suicide.

59 *to take arms . . . troubles*] This looks like a mixed metaphor, though Aristotle (*Ethic. Eudem.*, Bk. III, ch. i), Ælian in his *Histories*, and some later Greek writers describe a practice "among the Celts when maddened by anger" of taking up arms against the waves of the sea and of suffering themselves to be drowned rather than retreat from the incoming tide. It is doubtful if Shakespeare is here drawing upon classical learning, though Ælian was accessible in Abraham Fleming's translation, 1576. He more probably used "sea" in the sense of "mass" as in "*sea of joys*" (*Pericles*, V, i, 191), "*sea of glory*" (*Hen. VIII*, III, ii, 360), "*sea of care*" (*Lucrece*, 1100); "*Sea of troubles*" too was a common phrase in other languages. Cf. *κακῶν θάλασσα*, in Æschylus, *Septem contra Thebas*, lines 64 and 114.

No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to, 't is a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
 To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
 Must give us pause: there's the respect  
 That makes calamity of so long life;  
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, 70  
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
 The insolence of office, and the spurns  
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
 When he himself might his quietus make  
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,

65 *rub*] obstruction, obstacle. "Rub" was a technical term for any obstruction on the course in the game of bowls.

67 *this mortal coil*] probably "the turmoil of mortal life," with a possible suggestion of "fleshly bonds," which encase the soul like a coil of rope and are shuffled off at death.

68 *there's the respect*] that's the consideration.

71 *proud*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read, less pointedly, *poor*.

72 *despised*] slighted. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *dispriz'd*, i. e., undervalued.

75 *quietus*] a legal term for settlement of an account. Shakespeare uses the word elsewhere only in *Sonnet cxxvi*, 12.

76 *a bare bodkin*] Probably "a mere needle," though the interpretation "an unsheathed dagger" has good authority.

*fardels*] bundles, burdens. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *these Fardles*.

77 *grunt*] groan. This is often the meaning of "grunt" in Eliza-

But that the dread of something after death,  
 The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
 With this regard their currents turn awry  
 And lose the name of action. Soft you now!  
 The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
 Be all my sins remember'd.

bethan English. In the text of the 1676 Quarto "groan" was first substituted, and is the reading adopted in the transcript (c. 1680) of the words with musical accompaniment found among the Pepysian manuscripts in Magdalene College, Cambridge. Cf. *Jul. Caes.*, IV, i, 22, "to groan and sweat under the business."

79 *bound*] boundary. The general sentiment is common among poets. Cf. Catullus, III, 11-12: "Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum Illuc, unde negant redire quemquam." Marlowe, *Edward II*, V, vi, 65-66, describes a dying man as "a traveller" who "goes to discover countries yet unknown." Hamlet seems to forget that he has just seen the ghost of his dead father, but "returns" may well be explained as "comes back to abide."

83 *conscience*] introspection, speculation.

85 *thought*] anxiety.

86 *pitch*] height, technically the summit of the falcon's flight. Thus the Quartos. Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, i, 12: "of what validity and *pitch* soe'er." The Folios read *pith*. Cf. I, iv, 22, *supra*, "*pith* and marrow."

87 *awry*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios weakly substitute *away*.

89 *orisons*] prayers.

- OPH. Good my lord, 90  
How does your honour for this many a day?  
HAM. I humbly thank you: well, well, well.  
OPH. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longed long to re-deliver;  
I pray you, now receive them.  
HAM. No, not I;  
I never gave you aught.  
OPH. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;  
And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,  
Take these again; for to the noble mind 100  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
There, my lord.  
HAM. Ha, ha! are you honest?  
OPH. My lord?  
HAM. Are you fair?  
OPH. What means your lordship?  
HAM. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty  
should admit no discourse to your beauty.  
OPH. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce 110  
than with honesty?  
HAM. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner  
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the

---

103 *honest*] The word means "virtuous" as well as "truthful."

107-108 *your honesty . . . beauty*] Your virtue should not suffer any one to make appeal to your beauty. To preserve your chastity you must forbid any one to talk to you of your beauty.

109-110 *Could beauty . . . honesty* ?] Ophelia misunderstands Hamlet's remark; but Hamlet in his retort turns her misinterpretation to his own purpose. "Commerce" means "intercourse."

force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

OPH. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAM. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

OPH. I was the more deceived. 120

HAM. Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father? 130

OPH. At home, my lord.

HAM. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.

OPH. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

117-119 *virtue cannot . . . of it*] virtue cannot so impregnate our old wayward nature with sincerity but we shall still smack of our original taint (of insincerity).

122 *indifferent honest*] fairly honest.

124-127 *I am very proud . . . act them in*] These self-accusations ironically express the misconceptions that might be formed of his conduct by one who is ignorant of its true motives.

130 *Where's your father?*] Hamlet either catches sight of Polonius behind the arras, or has an intuition that Ophelia is playing her father's game.

HAM. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell. 140

OPH. O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAM. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [Exit.

OPH. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! 150  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!

142 *paintings*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *prattlings*, which is speciously supported by "lisp" in line 144. But Shakespeare is clearly referring to fashionable women's artificial toilet-practices.

143 *face*] Thus the Quartos. The Folio reading *pace* is a mere misprint.

144 *you jig*] you practice affectations in your walk.

145-146 *make your wantonness your ignorance*] excuse your wanton affectation on the score of innocent ignorance.

148 *all but one*] an allusion to the king.

152 *expectancy*] hope.

153 *The glass . . . form*] The mirror of fashion and the model of deportment. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, II, iii, 31-32 (of Hotspur): "He was the mark and glass, copy and form That fashion'd others."

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
 That suck'd the honey of his music vows,  
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;  
 That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth  
 Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me, 160  
 To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

*Re-enter KING and POLONIUS*

KING. Love! his affections do not that way tend;  
 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,  
 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul  
 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,  
 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose  
 Will be some danger: which for to prevent,  
 I have in quick determination  
 Thus set it down: — he shall with speed to England,  
 For the demand of our neglected tribute: 170  
 Haply the seas and countries different  
 With variable objects shall expel  
 This something-settled matter in his heart,  
 Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
 From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?  
 POL. It shall do well: but yet do I believe

158 *out of tune*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos misprint *out of time*.

159 *That unmatch'd . . . youth*] The unmatched form and shape of youth in his bloom. For "blown" cf. III, iii, 81, "crimes broad blown" (*i. e.*, in full bloom).

166 *the hatch and the disclose*] the hatching and the coming out of the shell. Both words are used technically of young birds chipping the shell at birth.

175 *From fashion of himself*] Out of keeping with his normal bearing.



The origin and commencement of his grief  
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!  
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;  
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please; 180  
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,  
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
To show his grief: let her be round with him;  
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear  
Of all their conference. If she find him not,  
To England send him, or confine him where  
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING. It shall be so:  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II — A HALL IN THE CASTLE

*Enter HAMLET and Players*

HAM. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced  
it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it,  
as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier  
spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with  
your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very tor-  
rent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your pas-  
sion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may  
give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear

183 *To show his grief*] To disclose his grievance.

185 *If she find him not*] If she does not discover, fails to detect, his secret.

6-7 *your passion*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios omit *your*.

7 *acquire and beget*] Both words mean much the same thing. "Beget"  
was in constant use as an intensive form of "get," *i. e.*, get firm hold  
of, procure. Cf. T. T.'s dedication of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*: "the  
only begetter," *i. e.*, procurer.

a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

14

FIRST PLAY. I warrant your honour.

HAM. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: Suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but

9 *robustious*] violent, blustering. So used in *Hen. V*, III, vii, 144, of a mastiff's onset.

*periwig-pated*] The wearing of wigs was confined entirely to actors at this date.

10 *the groundlings*] spectators in the pit or cheapest part of the theatre, where there was only standing room at a penny apiece.

11 *capable of*] capable of apprehending. Cf. III, iv, 127, *infra*.

13 *o'erdoing Termagant . . . Herod*] Both Termagant (a fabulous monster worshipped by Saracens) and Herod were familiar characters in the old mystery plays, and were suffered to introduce any amount of melodramatic bluster in their presentation.

20 *from the purpose*] contrary to the purpose.

23-24 *the very age . . . pressure*] (to delineate) the precise conditions of things at the date in their literal shape. "Pressure" means impression as of a mould.

24-25 *overdone or come tardy off*] exaggerated or inadequately presented.

make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. 34

FIRST PLAY. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

HAM. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. [Exeunt Players. 44]

*Enter* POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

POL. And the queen too, and that presently.

HAM. Bid the players make haste. [Exit Polonius.]  
Will you two help to hasten them?

26-27 *the censure . . . allowance*] the opinion of whom must in your estimation.

34 *abominably*] The word was mistakenly derived from "ab homine," *i. e.*, foreign to man. Hence its pertinence to the present context.

35 *indifferently*] fairly well. Cf. III, i, 122, *supra*: "*indifferent honest*."

44 *Go, make you ready*] The first Quarto (1603) makes Hamlet continue this speech with some curious specimens of the extemporised buffoonery of clowns against which he is giving warning.

ROS. } We will, my lord.  
 GUIL. }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

HAM. What ho! Horatio!

50

*Enter HORATIO*

HOR. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAM. Horatio, 'hou art e'en as just a man  
 As e'er my conversation coped withal.

HOR. O, my dear lord, —

HAM. Nay, do not think I flatter;  
 For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
 That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,  
 To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be  
 flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
 And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
 Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear? 60  
 Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,  
 And could of men distinguish, her election  
 Hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been  
 As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
 A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those  
 Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled

53 *my conversation coped withal*] my intercourse encountered.

58 *candied tongue*] the sugary tongue (of the sycophant).

59 *pregnant*] ready, supple.

60 *thrift*] profit, good success. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, i, 175: "a mind presages me such *thrift*."

67 *blood and judgement*] passion and reason, heart and mind. Cf. IV, iv, 58, *infra*, "my reason and my blood."

That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that  
man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him 70  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee. Something too much of this.  
There is a play to-night before the king;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death:  
I prithee, when thou seest that act a-foot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech, 80  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgements join  
In censure of his seeming.

HOR. Well, my lord:  
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,  
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

HAM. They are coming to the play: I must be  
idle:  
Get you a place.

77 *with the very comment . . . soul*] with all thy powers of observation.

79 *one speech*] Cf. II, ii, 535, *supra*, and III, ii, 249-54, *infra*.

82 *Vulcan's stithy*] Vulcan's forge or anvil.

85 *In censure of his seeming*] In estimating his appearance.

88 *I must be idle*] I must seem to have no purpose, behave as if I had no  
interest in what is going forward.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OTHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and other Lords attendant, with the Guard carrying torches*

KING. How fares our cousin Hamlet? 90

HAM. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

KING. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

HAM. No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

POL. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

HAM. What did you enact? 99

POL. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

HAM. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

91-92 *of the chameleon's dish: . . . air*] It was an old belief that the chameleon lived on nothing but air. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, i, 160-161: "Though the chameleon, Love, can feed on the air."

92 *promise-crammed*] filled with specious assurances of love and respect, such as the king had given Hamlet, *supra*, I, ii, 108 *seq.*

100 *Julius Cæsar*] Cæsar's death was a frequent subject of university plays throughout Europe. One was performed at Oxford in 1582. Shakespeare's play of *Julius Cæsar* immediately preceded the production of *Hamlet*; it was probably written in 1601.

100-101 *killed i' the Capitol*] A popular fallacy, which Shakespeare adopted in his tragedy, represents the Capitol as the scene of Cæsar's murder. It really took place in the "curia Pompeii," a room of assembly adjoining Pompey's theatre in the Campus Martius. See note on *Jul. Cæs.*, I, iii, 126.

103 *calf*] dolt. Cf. V, i, 112, *infra*.

ROS. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

QUEEN. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAM. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

POL. [*To the King*] O, ho! do you mark that?

HAM. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*]

OPH. No, my lord.

HAM. I mean, my head upon your lap? 110

OPH. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Do you think I meant country matters?

OPH. I think nothing, my lord.

HAM. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPH. What is, my lord?

HAM. Nothing.

OPH. You are merry, my lord.

HAM. Who, I?

OPH. Ay, my lord. 119

HAM. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.

OPH. Nay, 't is twice two months, my lord.

HAM. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two

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112 *country matters*] rusticity, rudeness, coarseness.

125 *a suit of sables*] probably a rich dress trimmed with sable fur, which was quite unsuited for mourning attire. Hamlet obviously means that he is going to leave off black garments. But at IV, vii, 80, *infra*, *sables* is noticed as the appropriate dress of "settled age." Hamlet may be also ironically hinting here that the interval of two months since his father's death is reckoned of such length at his

months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by 'r lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is, "For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot."

130

*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters*

*Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with*

---

uncle's court that he has grown within the time into quite an old man, and ought to divest himself of his youthful clothes and assume the dignified garb of a veteran.

129 *not thinking on*] not to be thought of, to be forgotten.

130 *For, O, . . . forgot*] See note on *L. L. L.*, III, i, 26.

(stage direction) *Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters . . . love*] Thus the Folios. There are slight variations in the text of the Quartos; but none are of great importance. A dumb-show of this precise pattern is unknown elsewhere. In some early plays, cf. *Gorboduc* (1565) and *Jocasta* (1575), each act is preceded by a "tableau vivant" in which allegorical figures or mythological personages suggest in silent action the moral of the ensuing drama. Elsewhere, e. g., *Pericles*, Act II, Sc. i, Act III, Sc. i, mute exhibitions are given of necessary incidents which were not otherwise represented. Here the acting of the coming play in silent gesture would seem designed by Hamlet to make his purpose doubly sure. The king in any case proves a match for the first ordeal.



*her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.* [Exeunt.

OPH. What means this, my lord?

HAM. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

OPH. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter Prologue*

HAM. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

OPH. Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAM. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

141

OPH. You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.

PRO. For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently.

132 *miching mallecho*] sneaking wickedness or mischief. Thus Malone. The Folios read *Miching Malicho*, the First Quarto *myching Mallico*, and the other Quartos *munching Mallico*. "Mich" is a recognised word meaning "to play the sneak or skulk," "Micher" is used in the sense of truant in *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 396. "Mallecho" is from the Spanish "malhecho," wickedness, indecorous behaviour. Minshew translates "malefactum." Shirley employs the word in *The Gentleman of Venice*, Act III, Sc. iv: "Be humble, thou man of *Mallecho*, or thou diest."

142 *naught*] naughty, improper.

HAM. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPH. 'T is brief, my lord.

HAM. As woman's love.

*Enter two Players, King and Queen*

P. KING. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round 150

Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,

And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen

About the world have times twelve thirties been,

Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands

Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. QUEEN. So many journeys may the sun and moon

Make us again count o'er ere love be done!

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,

So far from cheer and from your former state,

That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust, 160

Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:

For women's fear and love holds quantity,

In neither aught, or in extremity.

147 *the posy of a ring*] short mottoes engraved inside a ring.

150 *cart*] chariot. "Cart" has here an archaic flavour. The style of the "play" is intentionally stilted, and seems fashioned on Elizabethan renderings of Senecan drama.

151 *Neptune's . . . ground*] Bombastic phrases for "sea" and "earth."

155 *commutual*] mutually.

161-162 *must: For*] Here the Folios omit a line which is found only in the Quartos: *For women feare too much, even as they loue*. It is probable that the author intended to erase this line, which he in effect refashioned in the one that follows it. The next line begins in the Quartos with *And*, for which the Folios read *For*.

162-163 *holds quantity . . . in extremity*] have equal capacity, have the same measure of strength. Neither is worth reckoning at all, or both are at the zenith of intensity. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 232: "Things base and vile, *holding no quantity*," and note.

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,  
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear,  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. KING. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;  
My operant powers their functions leave to do:  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou —

170

P. QUEEN. O, confound the rest!  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:  
In second husband let me be accurst!  
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAM. [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

P. QUEEN. The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:  
A second time I kill my husband dead,  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

180

P. KING. I do believe you think what now you speak,  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth but poor validity:  
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 't is that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:

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169 *leave*] cease.

177 *instances*] motives, inducements.

178 *base respects of thrift*] contemptible considerations of profit.

184 *poor validity*] feeble strength.

187 *Most necessary*] Quite inevitable.

What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose. 190  
 The violence of either grief or joy  
 Their own enactures with themselves destroy:  
 Where joy, most revels, grief doth most lament;  
 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
 This world is not for aye, nor 't is not strange  
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change,  
 For 't is a question left us yet to prove,  
 Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.  
 The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;  
 The poor advanced makes friends of enemies: 200  
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;  
 For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try  
 Directly seasons him his enemy.  
 But, orderly to end where I begun,  
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run,  
 That our devices still are overthrown,  
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:

191-192 *The violence . . . destroy*] That which either grief or joy enacts or resolves to perform when at the height of its violence is cancelled when the emotion subsides.

193-194 *Where joy . . . accident*] The meaning is that the temperament most capable of grief is also most capable of joy, and turns from the one emotion to the other on very slight provocation.

196 *our loves*] the love we excite in others.

199 *favourite*] Thus all the early editions save the First Folio, which has *fauourites*, the plural for the singular, with very cacophonous effect. Yet the plural well suggests a swarm of sycophants scattering in flight. There are many instances in Shakespeare of a plural subject with a singular verb. Cf. line 162, *supra*.

204 *Directly seasons . . . enemy*] Quickly matures his enmity, brings out in him his true character of enemy.

So think thou wilt no second husband wed,  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead. 210

P. QUEEN. Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light!  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!  
To desperation turn my trust and hope!  
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!  
Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,  
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAM. If she should break it now!

P. KING. 'T is deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while; 220  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.

P. QUEEN. Sleep rock thy brain;  
And never come mischance between us twain! [Exit.

HAM. Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAM. O, but she'll keep her word.

KING. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in 't?

HAM. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world. 230

213-214 *To desperation . . . my scope!*] These lines are found only in the Quartos. The Folios omit them. For the Quarto reading *And Anchors*, Theobald substituted *An anchor's*. "Anchor" means "anchorite." The line signifies "May an anchorite or hermit's prison fare be my lot!"

215 *Each opposite . . . joy*] Every harm or trouble that blanches the countenance habituated to joy.

227 *argument*] plot or story. Cf. II, ii, 350, *supra*.

KING. What do you call the play?

HAM. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 't is a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

*Enter* LUCIANUS

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPH. You are as good as a chorus, my lord. 239

HAM. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

OPH. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

232 *The Mouse-trap*] The play is the trap set to catch the mouse of the king's conscience.

*Tropically*] Metaphorically, figuratively. The First Quarto reads, punningly, *trapically*.

234 *Baptista*] Usually a man's name, as in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Baptista is father of Katharine.

236 *free souls*] innocent souls. Cf. II, ii, 557, *supra*, and *Wint. Tale*, I, ii, 112: "a *free* face."

237 *let the galled jade . . . unwrung*] a familiar proverb.

239 *a chorus*] the actor appointed in the older Elizabethan plays to explain the progress of the plot between the acts. See Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

240-241 *interpret . . . puppets*] Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, i, 84-85: "O exceeding puppet! Now will he interpret her." In puppet or marionette shows, which were popular at the time, explanatory words were spoken by an attendant who bore the title of "interpreter of the puppets." Cf. Greene's *Groatworth of Wit* (Works, ed. Grosart, vol. xii, p. 132): "it was I that pende the Moral of mans wit, the Dialogue of Diues, and for seauen yeeres space was absolute *interpreter* of the *puppets*."

HAM. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

OPH. Still better, and worse.

HAM. So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

LUC. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;  
 Confederate season, else no creature seeing; 250  
 Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
 With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
 Thy natural magic and dire property,  
 On wholesome life usurp immediately.

*[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.]*

HAM. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate. His name 's Gonzago: the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPH. The king rises.

246 So] *i. e.*, "for better and for worse."

So . . . husbands] Thus Pope, after the First Quarto reading, *So you must take your husband*. The other Quartos and the Folios have, less intelligibly, *So you mistake your husbands*.

248 the croaking raven . . . revenge] an inexact quotation with satirical intent of bombastic lines ("The screeking raven sits croaking for revenge, Whole heads of beasts comes bellowing for revenge") from *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third*, 1594 (*Shakespeare's Library* (1875), Part II, vol. I, p. 117).

249-254 *Thoughts black . . . immediately*] Possibly these are the opening lines of the passage which Hamlet promised to interpolate into the piece. See note on II, ii, 535, *supra*.

250 *Confederate season*] Time conspiring with the criminal.

252 *Hecate's ban*] Hecate is here introduced as the divine patroness of witchcraft. Cf. *Macbeth*, III, v, 1, and note.

254 *usurp*] let them all seize.

HAM. What, frightened with false fire!

260

QUEEN. How fares my lord?

POL. Give o'er the play.

KING. Give me some light. Away!

POL. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.*]

HAM. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep:

Thus runs the world away.

268

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers — if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me — with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

260 *false fire*] fire signals employed to deceive an enemy.

209 *a forest of feathers*] an actor's ornate costume. Rich apparel was commonly worn by leading actors both on and off the stage, and heavy and expensive plumage often adorned their hats. Cf. Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive*, 1606, Act III, Sc. i: "I carry a whole *forest of feathers* with me."

270 *turn Turk*] apostatise, undergo desperate change.

270-271 *with two Provincial roses . . . shoes*] with ribbons made into rosettes resembling roses of Provence (or Provins), on my slashed shoes. "Provincial" was a common epithet of the large damask French rose. *Razed* is the reading of the Quartos. The Folios read *rac'd*, i. e., streaked. But there is better authority for *razed* as applied to shoes.

271-272 *get me . . . players*] obtain for me a partnership in a company of players. Hamlet suggests in this speech that his success in revising and producing the play would entitle him, were he now to turn actor, and assume the splendid raiment of the professional player, to receive as a reward a share in an acting company's profits. It was the actor-



HOR. Half a share.

HAM. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here  
A very, very — pajock.

HOR. You might have rhymed.

HAM. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for  
a thousand pound. Didst perceive? 281

HOR. Very well, my lord.

HAM. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HOR. I did very well note him.

HAM. Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the re-  
corders!

For if the king like not the comedy,  
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

---

dramatist Shakespeare's dramatic triumphs which led his colleagues to present him with an important share in the profits of their performances at the Globe Theatre.

278 *pajock*] Thus substantially all the early editions, though the First Folio and early Quartos substitute *i* for *j*. "Pajock" or "peajock" is a dialect form of "peacock," a bird popularly credited with thievish and lustful propensities. Hamlet substitutes in his excitement this full-sounding word for "ass" which the rhymes of the stanza obviously require. Sir Henry Irving made Hamlet carelessly toy with a fan of peacock's feathers which Ophelia had dropped. When his eye falls on the fan, he tossed it away with the exclamation *pajock*.

285-286 *recorders*] long flutes or flageolets. At lines 342 and 361, *infra*, Hamlet calls the same instrument the "pipe."

288 *perdy*] "par Dieu," by God.

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

GUIL. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAM. Sir, a whole history. 291

GUIL. The king, sir, —

HAM. Ay, sir, what of him?

GUIL. Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

HAM. With drink, sir?

GUIL. No, my lord, rather with choler.

HAM. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

GUIL. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair. 301

HAM. I am tame, sir: pronounce.

GUIL. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAM. You are welcome.

GUIL. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business. 310

HAM. Sir, I cannot.

---

294 *distempered*] indisposed, agitated.

298–299 *to put him to his purgation*] The phrase means both “to give him purging medicine,” and to set in motion a legal process for clearing an accused person.

301 *frame*] good order, coherence.

GUIL. What, my lord?

HAM. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say, —

ROS. Then thus she says; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAM. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart. 321

ROS. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

HAM. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

ROS. My lord, you once did love me.

HAM. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ROS. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend. 330

HAM. Sir, I lack advancement.

ROS. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

HAM. Ay, sir, but "while the grass grows," — the proverb is something musty.

---

318 *amazement and admiration*] bewilderment and astonishment.

325 *trade*] business.

327 *these pickers and stealers*] these hands; an allusion to the admonition of the Church Catechism "to keep my hands from *picking and stealing*."

334 "*while the grass grows*" ] The old proverb ends "the silly horse he starves."

*Re-enter Players with recorders*

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you: — why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

GUIL. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly. 340

HAM. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

GUIL. My lord, I cannot.

HAM. I pray you.

GUIL. Believe me, I cannot.

HAM. I do beseech you.

GUIL. I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAM. It is as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops. 351

336 *recorders*] See note on line 286, *supra*.

336-337 *To withdraw with you*] Capell marked these words as "Aside."

Malone added the direction "Taking Guildenstern aside." The phrase means "Let me have a private word with you," and is probably addressed to Guildenstern at the moment that Hamlet takes a recorder from the hand of one of the players.

337-338 *to recover . . . toil*] to get to the windward of a hunted animal was to prevent it from scenting its pursuers, and thus facilitate its being driven into a toil or snare.

339-340 *if my duty . . . unmannerly*] Probably the meaning of this vague complimentary phrase is: his orders from the king may compel him to be too obtrusive, and thus his real affection may be obscured by his bad manners.

348 *ventages*] holes in the barrel of the pipe, often called the stops.

GUIL. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAM. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

*Re-enter* POLONIUS

God bless you, sir!

POL. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

HAM. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

POL. By the mass, and 't is like a camel, indeed.

HAM. Methinks it is like a weasel.

POL. It is backed like a weasel.

HAM. Or like a whale?

POL. Very like a whale.

HAM. Then I will come to my mother by and by.

370

---

362 *though you can fret . . . upon me*] Cf. *T. of Shrew*, II, i, 151: "*Frets*, call you these?" quoth she: "I'll fume with them." The quibble is on "fret" in the two senses of "annoy" and as a noun meaning the cross-bar of wood or wire over which the strings of a lute or guitar were stretched.

They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

POL. I will say so. [Exit Polonius.]

HAM. "By and by" is easily said. Leave me, friends.

[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
 When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out  
 Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,  
 And do such bitter business as the day 381  
 Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.  
 O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever  
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:  
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural:  
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none;  
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;  
 How in my words soever she be shent,  
 To give them seals never, my soul, consent! [Exit.]

374 *to the top of my bent*] to the fullest extent. Cf. II, ii, 39, *supra*: "in the full bent," and note.

377 "*By and by*"] At once.

378-379 *'Tis now . . . yawn*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, V, i, 368-371.

381 *bitter . . . day*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less satisfactorily, *business as the bitter day*.

384 *The soul of Nero*] The emperor Nero murdered his mother Agrippina. Cf. *K. John*, V, ii, 152-153: "You bloody *Neroes*, ripping up the womb Of your dear mother England."

386 *speak daggers*] This is a favourite construction with Shakespeare. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 220: "She *speaks poniards*, and every word *stabs*," and *K. John*, II, i, 462: "He *speaks plain cannon fire*."

388 *shent*] reproved, rebuked.

389 *To give them seals*] To give my words the full effect of sealed deeds, to put my cruel words into actual deeds.

## SCENE III—A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

KING. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us  
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;  
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,  
And he to England shall along with you:  
The terms of our estate may not endure  
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow  
Out of his lunacies.

GUIL. We will ourselves provide:  
Most holy and religious fear it is  
To keep those many many bodies safe  
That live and feed upon your majesty.

10

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound  
With all the strength and armour of the mind  
To keep itself from noyance; but much more  
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests  
The lives of many. The cease of majesty  
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw

---

5 *terms of our estate*] conditions of our royal position.

6 *near us*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *dangerous*.

7 *lunacies*] Thus the Folios, which make the line an Alexandrine. Theobald substituted *lunes* (*i. e.*, fits of madness). The Quartos read *browes*, which has been explained to mean here "frowns" or "effronteries."

11 *The single and peculiar life*] The life of the private individual.

13 *noyance*] hurt, harm.

15 *The cease of majesty*] The decease of majesty, the dying king.

16 *gulf*] whirlpool.

What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel,  
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things  
 Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls, 20  
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
 Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone  
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

KING. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage,  
 For we will fetters put about this fear,  
 Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. }  
 GUIL. } We will haste us.

*[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]*

*Enter POLONIUS*

POL. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:  
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,  
 To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him  
 home:

And, as you said, and wisely was it said, 30  
 'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,  
 Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear  
 The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:  
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,  
 And tell you what I know.

KING. Thanks, dear my lord.

*[Exit Polonius.]*

---

20 *mortised*] dovetailed; a term in carpentry.

24 *Arm you*] Prepare yourselves.

33 *of vantage*] from a point of vantage, from a good place for secret observation.



O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will:  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent, 40  
And like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up; 50  
My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder?"  
That cannot be, since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?  
In the corrupted currents of this world

---

47 *confront*] oppose so as to destroy.

48-50 *what's in prayer . . . being down*] We pray either to be prevented from falling into temptation or for pardon when we have sinned.

55 *mine own ambition*] the object of my ambition.

56 *retain the offence*] keep the profits of the crime.

57 *In the corrupted currents of this world*] In the courses which corruption ordinarily takes through the world. Thus the Quartos. For *currents* Folios read *currants*. 'Currents, i. e., occurrents, occurrences, has been suggested, as in V, ii, 349, *infra*. But such a change is unnecessary.

Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above; 60  
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
 In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd  
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults  
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
 Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?  
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
 O limed soul, that struggling to be free  
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! make assay!  
 Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of 70  
 steel,  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!  
 All may be well. [Retires and kneels.]

*Enter HAMLET*

HAM. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;  
 And now I'll do't: and so he goes to heaven:  
 And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:  
 A villain kills my father; and for that,

58 *shove by*] drive out, expel.

61-62 *the action . . . nature*] the act stands for what it is; *the action lies* is a common legal phrase.

64 *give in*] supply.

68 *limed soul*] The soul is likened to a bird caught in a trap with birdlime.

69 *engaged*] entangled.

73 *it pat, now he is praying*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less forcibly, *it, but now a (i. e., he) is a praying*.

75 *That would be scann'd*] That requires consideration.

I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
To heaven.

O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread, 80  
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;  
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?  
But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,  
To take him in the purging of his soul,  
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?  
No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:  
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage, 90  
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;  
At game, a-swearing, or about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in 't;  
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven  
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black

---

79 *hire and salary*] The Quartos weakly read *base and silly*.

81 *broad blown* . . . *May*] in full bloom, with all the sap of May. Cf.  
I, v, 76, *supra*: "Cut off even in the *blossoms of my sin*"; and III, i,  
159: "*blown youth*."

83 *in our circumstance* . . . *thought*] from detailed consideration and  
general tendency of our thought, as far as our mind can per-  
ceive.

88 *hent*] Thus all the early editions save the late Quarto of 1676, which  
reads *time*, and the Fourth Folio, which substitutes *bent*. The old  
verb "hent" in the sense of "clutch" or "grip" is common in Eliza-  
bethan literature. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, IV, iii, 119: "Merrily *hent* the  
stile-a." The substantive is rare and means either "clutch" (*i.e.*, grip)  
or "intention" (*i.e.*, purpose, that which is gripped by the mind).  
The latter is probably the meaning here.

As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays: 95  
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit.]

KING. [Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts remain  
 below:  
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [Exit.]

## SCENE IV — THE QUEEN'S CLOSET

*Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS*

POL. He will come straight. Look you lay home to  
 him:  
 Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,  
 And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between  
 Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.  
 Pray you, be round with him.

HAM. [Within] Mother, mother, mother!

QUEEN. I'll warrant you; fear me not. Withdraw, I  
 hear him coming. [Polonius hides behind the arras.]

*Enter HAMLET*

HAM. Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

96 *This physic*] The "purging" of the king's "soul" by prayer. Cf. line 85, *supra*.

4 *sconce*] Hanmer's correction of *silence*, the reading of the Second Quarto and of all later editions. The First Quarto has *I'll shroude my selfe*. For "sconce" cf. *M. Wives*, III, iii, 77-78: "I will *ensconce* me behind the arras." But *I'll silence me*, i. e., I'll hold my tongue, may be right. It accords with the speaker's garrulous propensity.

5 *round*] direct, outspoken.

HAM. Mother, you have my father much offended. 10

QUEEN. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAM. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN. Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAM. What's the matter now?

QUEEN. Have you forgot me?

HAM. No, by the rood, not so:  
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;  
And — would it were not so! — you are my mother.

QUEEN. Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAM. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;

You go not till I set you up a glass  
Where you may see the inmost part of you. 20

QUEEN. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me? Help, help, ho!

POL. [*Behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!

HAM. [*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead! [*Makes a pass through the arras.*]

POL. [*Behind*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies.*]

QUEEN. O me, what hast thou done?

HAM. Nay, I know not: is it the king?

QUEEN. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAM. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,  
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN. As kill a king!

---

12 *a wicked*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *an idle*.

14 *by the rood*] by the crucifix.

HAM.

Ay, lady, 't was my word. 30

*[Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius.]*

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.

Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,

And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff;

If damned custom have not brass'd it so,

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy  
tongue

In noise so rude against me?

HAM.

Such an act

40

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,

Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,

And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows

As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction plucks

The very soul, and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

50

Is thought-sick at the act.

38 *against sense*] against feeling.42 *takes off the rose*] removes the grace, the beauty. Cf. III, i, 152, *supra*:  
"the rose of the fair state."46 *contraction*] the marriage contract, matrimony.49 *solidity*] solid earth.50 *as against the doom*] as if in sight of the day of judgment.

QUEEN. Ay me, what act,  
That roars so loud and thunders in the index?  
HAM. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination and a form indeed, 60  
Where every god did seem to set his seal  
To give the world assurance of a man:  
This was your husband. Look you now, what  
follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?

52 *index*] prelude (of the indictment). An "index" commonly prefaced an Elizabethan book.

53 *Look here . . . and on this*] There is some difference of opinion as to whether Hamlet points to two portraits hung on the walls, or takes a miniature of his father from his pocket, or is merely drawing on his imagination. The last interpretation seems, in the view of the scanty scenic machinery of Shakespeare's stage, to be the most probable.

54 *counterfeit presentment*] portrait, mimic representation.

56 *Hyperion's curls*] See note on I, ii, 140, *supra*.

*front*] forehead. The statues of Jupiter gave him a very noble brow, indicating much intellectual power.

58 *station*] attitude or pose.

58-59 *Mercury . . . hill*] The god Mercury is very similarly described in Virgil, *Æneid*, IV, 246-255, which was accessible in English translations.

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
 And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
 You cannot call it love, for at your age  
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
 And waits upon the judgement: and what judgement 70  
 Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,  
 Else could you not have motion: but sure that sense  
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err,  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was re'er so thrall'd  
 But it reserved some quantity of choice,  
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't  
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?  
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense 80  
 Could not so mope.  
 O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,

66 *leave to feed*] leave off feeding.

67 *batten*] gourmandise, feed like a glutton.

*this moor*] this low and uninviting pasture.

71-76 *Sense . . . difference*] This passage is omitted from the Folios. It is only found in the Second and later Quartos. In this passage "sense" is thrice used with a meaning indistinguishable from "reason." Taking the words generally Hamlet points out that his mother must have reason or brains, otherwise she could not have power of movement. But her reasoning faculty is paralysed, quite stifled, not merely perverted as in madness. When reason is dominated by insanity, it still retains some power of choice, which must have come into play, when the difference between the objects of choice differed so vastly.

77 *hoodman-blind*] blind man's buff.

81 *so mope*] show so much stupidity. Cf. *Tempest*, V, i, 239-240: "Even in a dream were we . . . brought *moping* hither."



If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax  
 And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame  
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,  
 And reason pandars will.

QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more:  
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,  
 And there I see such black and grained spots 90  
 As will not leave their tinct.

HAM. Nay, but to live  
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
 Over the nasty sty, —

QUEEN. O, speak to me no more;  
 These words like daggers enter in my ears;  
 No more, sweet Hamlet!

HAM. A murderer and a villain;  
 A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
 Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;  
 A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole 100  
 And put it in his pocket!

83 *mutine*] mutiny; only used here as a verb. But the word reappears  
 as a noun, meaning mutineer, V, ii, 6, *infra*.

85 *her own fire*] the fire of flaming youth.

88 *reason pandars will*] reason becomes the pander, or disreputable agent,  
 of lust. "Lust" is a common sense of "will."

90 *grained*] ingrained, fast dyed.

92 *enseamed*] defiled.

98 *a vice of kings*] a buffoon or clown of a king. In the old morality  
 plays the "vice" was a clown or buffoon.

QUEEN. No more!

HAM. A king of shreds and patches —

*Enter Ghost*

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

QUEEN. Alas, he's mad!

HAM. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by  
The important acting of your dread command?  
O, say!

GHOST. Do not forget: this visitation 110  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But look, amazement on thy mother sits:  
O, step between her and her fighting soul:  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAM. How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN. Alas, how is't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;

102 *shreds and patches*] an allusion to the motley or patchwork dress of the professional fool or clown.

104 *your gracious*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *you gracious*.

107 *lapsed . . . passion*] having let time slip by through indulgence in mere passion.

108 *important*] urgent, importunate.

114 *Conceit in weakest bodies*] Imagination in weakest creatures.

118 *incorporal*] ethereal, immaterial. "Corporal" for "corporeal" is not uncommon. But this form seems unknown elsewhere.

And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm, 120  
 Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,  
 Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,  
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
 Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAM. On him, on him! Look you how pale he glares!  
 His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
 Would make them capable. Do not look upon me,  
 Lest with this piteous action you convert  
 My stern effects: then what I have to do  
 Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood. 130

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this?

HAM. Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAM. Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN. No, nothing but ourselves.

HAM. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!  
 My father, in his habit as he lived!  
 Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost.*]

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain:  
 This bodiless creation ecstasy  
 Is very cunning in.

HAM. Ecstasy!

121 *Your . . . excrements*] Your hairs normally at rest (start up) as though the outgrowths of the body were endowed with life. "Excrements" is a generic term for hair, feathers, and nails.

127 *capable*] *sc.*, of feeling, susceptible. Cf. III, ii, 11, *supra*.

129 *My stern effects*] Probably the execution of my stern resolve. Thus all the early editions. The reading is harsh. For *effects* Singer suggested *affects*, *i. e.*, affections, temper, disposition.

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time, 140  
 And makes as healthful music: it is not madness  
 That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,  
 And I the matter will re-word, which madness  
 Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
 Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
 That not your trespass but my madness speaks:  
 It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
 Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;  
 Repent what's past, avoid what is to come, 150  
 And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,  
 For in the fatness of these pursy times  
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,  
 Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

QUEEN. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in  
 twain.

---

147 *skin*] cover with a skin. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, II, ii, 136: "medicine . . . That *skins* the vice o' the top."

155 *curb*] The first Folio reads "courb." The word is usually interpreted as a derivative from the French "courber," to bend, curve. But neither "curb" nor "courb" is found in any sense except in the ordinary one of "restrain" elsewhere in Shakespeare, and very rarely in other English literature. A seventeenth-century reader in the copy of the First Folio now belonging to Mr. Marsden J. Perry, of Providence, R. I., substituted in manuscript the reading "couch," a word used by Shakespeare in the sense of "cringe" (cf. V, i, 216, *infra*: "*Couch* down awhile"). This emendation well harmonises with "woo," and deserves acceptance (cf. *Athenæum*, August 19, 1899). Hamlet's general meaning is that virtue has become the obsequious servitor of vice.

HAM. O, throw away the worser part of it,  
 And live the purer with the other half.  
 Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;  
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
 That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,  
 Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,  
 That to the use of actions fair and good  
 He likewise gives a frock or livery,  
 That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,  
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
 To the next abstinence; the next more easy;  
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
 And either . . . the devil, or throw him out

160

160 *Assume*] Acquire, with no sense of dissimulation.

161-165 *That monster . . . put on*] These lines appear only in the Quartos. They are omitted from the Folios. The Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quartos after *eat* at line 161 omit the comma, which later Quartos insert. With that necessary punctuation the meaning must be: "That monster, custom, who destroys all natural sensibility; custom, that devil among human habits of conduct, is yet an angel in this regard, that when once the habit of fair and good actions is acquired, custom lends a cloak that is worn quite easily." In other words, bad habits, with their numbing or stupefying effects on the conscience, are most easily formed, but good habits are fostered no less readily.

167-170 *the next more . . . potency*] Thus the Quartos. The lines are omitted from the Folios.

168 *use*] habit.

169 *And either . . . the devil*] Thus the Second and Third Quartos, which leave the line manifestly incomplete. The Fourth Quarto reads *And maister the devil*; the later Quartos, *And master the devil*. Modern editors regularise the metre by reading *And either curb* (or *lay, or quell*) *the devil*. Any of these suggestions suit the context.

With wondrous potency. Once more, good night: 170  
 And when you are desirous to be blest,  
 I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

[*Pointing to Polonius.*]

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,  
 To punish me with this, and this with me,  
 That I must be their scourge and minister.  
 I will bestow him, and will answer well  
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:  
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.  
 One word more, good lady.

QUEEN. What shall I do? 180

HAM. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:  
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;  
 Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse;  
 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,  
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,  
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
 That I essentially am not in madness,

171-172 *And when . . . of you*] The desire of a blessing is a sign of contrition and grace, and Hamlet will ask a mother's blessing of the queen, when she gives this sign of repentance.

175 *their scourge*] heaven's scourge.

180 *One . . . lady*] Thus the Quartos. The words are omitted from the Folios.

182 *bloat*] bloated; probably dropsical through intemperance. This is Warburton's correction of the Quarto reading *blowt* and the Folio *blunt*.

183 *mouse*] a common term of endearment. Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, v, 58: "good my *mouse* of virtue."

184 *reechy*] filthy.

186 *ravel . . . out*] unravel, disclose.

But mad in craft. 'T were good you let him  
know;

For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,  
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib, 190  
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?  
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,  
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,  
To try conclusions, in the basket creep  
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath  
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe  
What thou hast said to me.

HAM. I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN. Alack, 200  
I had forgot: 't is so concluded on.

190 *a paddock . . . a gib*] a toad . . . a gib-cat, a tom-cat.

194-196 *like the famous ape . . . neck down*] This fable is unidentified.

It would seem to tell of an ape who, creeping into a basket of live birds, by way of imitative experiment, jumped out with a view to flying, and thus broke its neck. The revelation which Hamlet is bidding his mother make will cost her her pride, if not her life.

200 *I must to England*] It is not plain how Hamlet learnt the king's intention to send him to England. This the king first announced privately to Polonius, III, i, 169, *supra*, and then secretly communicated to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, III, iii, 4. But the present context (with Hamlet's "you know that?", and the queen's retort, "Alack, I had forgot") almost suggests that Hamlet had somehow contrived to acquire the information with the queen's connivance. Subsequently at IV, iii, 46, *infra*, when Hamlet is told that England is his destination, he pretends to have heard nothing of the design earlier. But that may be a part of his policy.

HAM. There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows,  
 Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,  
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,  
 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;  
 For 't is the sport to have the engineer  
 Hoist with his own petard: and 't shall go hard  
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
 And blow them at the moon: O, 't is most sweet  
 When in one line two crafts directly meet. 210  
 This man shall set me packing:  
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.  
 Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor  
 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,  
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.  
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
 Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; Hamlet dragging in Polonius.*]

202-210 *There's letters seal'd . . . directly meet*] Thus the Quartos. The lines are omitted from the Folios.

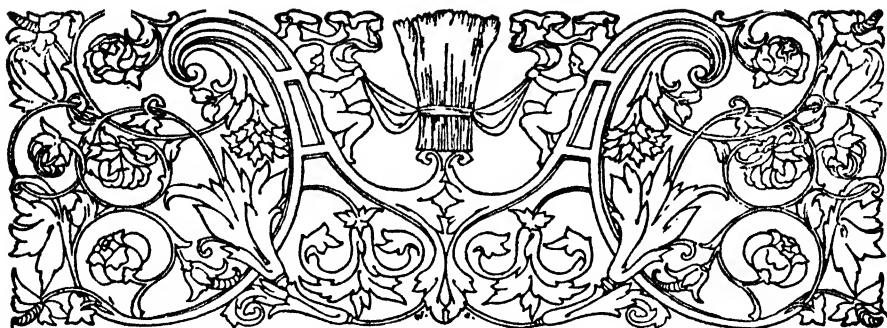
203 *adders fang'd*] adders with fangs.

206 *engineer*] the old form of engineer.

207 *Hoist . . . petar*] Hoisted with his own petard or mortar; petard was a piece of ordnance used in blowing open gates and doors.

211 *This man . . . packing*] This uncle of mine shall turn me into a plotter. "Packing" is used in a double sense, both of conspiring and of hurrying off.



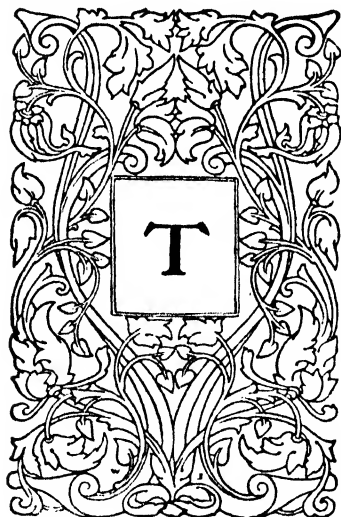


## ACT FOURTH — SCENE I

### A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

KING



HERE'S MATTER IN  
these sighs, these profound  
heaves:

You must translate: 't is fit we  
understand them.

Where is your son?

QUEEN. Bestow this place on  
us a little while.

*[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]*

Ah, mine own lord, what have I  
seen to-night!

KING. What, Gertrude? How  
does Hamlet?

QUEEN. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend  
Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,

ACT IV, SCENE 1] The Quarto of 1676 first made Act IV to begin here,  
and that arrangement is generally followed. But this scene closely  
continues the action of the preceding one, and there is some ground  
for deferring the opening of a new act till Scene iv, *infra*.

Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
Whips out his rapier, cries "A rat, a rat!" 10  
And in this brainish apprehension kills  
The unseen good old man.

KING. O heavy deed!  
It had been so with us, had we been there:  
His liberty is full of threats to all,  
To you yourself, to us, to every one.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?  
It will be laid to us, whose providence  
Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,  
This mad young man: but so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit, 20  
But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

QUEEN. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:  
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

KING. O Gertrude, come away!  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,  
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed 30  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

---

11 *brainish apprehension*] crazy notion.

18 *kept short . . . out of haunt*] kept within bounds . . . removed from company. For "kept short, restrain'd," cf. I, iii, 125, *supra*: "And with a larger *tether* may he walk."

26 *a mineral*] a metallic vein in a mine or a lode.

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:  
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body  
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

*[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;  
And let them know, both what we mean to do,  
And what's untimely done. . . .

40

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter  
As level as the cannon to his blank  
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name  
And hit the woundless air. O, come away!  
My soul is full of discord and dismay. *[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE II — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter HAMLET*

HAM. Safely stowed.

ROS. }  
GUIL. } *[Within]* Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

40-44 *And what's untimely done. . . . woundless air]* Thus the Quartos.

The Folios omit lines 41-44 (*whose whisper . . . woundless air*).

Theobald inserted *Happily slander* after *untimely done*, which Capell changed to *So haply slander*, words which are usually adopted to fill the obvious hiatus, and make satisfactory grammar and sense.

41 *diameter]* probably used for "circumference."

42 *blank]* bull's-eye; the white mark in the centre of a target.

HAM. But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet?  
O, here they come.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

ROS. What have you done, my lord, with the dead  
body?

HAM. Compounded it with dust, whereto 't is kin.

ROS. Tell us where 't is, that we may take it thence  
And bear it to the chapel.

HAM. Do not believe it.

ROS. Believe what?

10

HAM. That I can keep your counsel and not mine  
own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROS. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAM. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance,  
his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the  
king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape,  
in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed:  
when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you,  
and, sponge, you shall be dry again. 20

ROS. I understand you not, my lord.

HAM. I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a  
foolish ear.

---

6 *Compounded*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *Compound*, in the imperative, which suits the context better. For Hamlet has not buried Polonius' body.

15 *countenance*] favour.

16 *authorities*] offices of authority.

17 *like an ape*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *like an apple*, which may safely be rejected.

ROS. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

HAM. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing —

GUIL. A thing, my lord?

HAM. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. [*Exeunt.* 30]

### SCENE III—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter KING, attended*

KING. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body. How dangerous is it that this man goes loose! Yet must not we put the strong law on him: He's loved of the distracted multitude, Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes; And where 't is so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd, But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even, This sudden sending him away must seem Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown By desperate appliance are relieved, 10  
Or not at all.

26-27 *The body . . . is a thing*] Hamlet is intentionally talking nonsense. But he may be contrasting confusedly the fleshy form of the king his uncle with the disembodied spirit of the king his father.

29-30 *Hide fox, and all after*] Probably a cry of children playing hide and seek.

4 *distracted*] easily distracted, inconstant.

6-7 *the offender's . . . offence*] the populace scrutinises the punishment, but overlooks the crime.

9 *Deliberate pause*] The outcome of careful deliberation.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ*

How now! what hath befall'n?

ROS. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

KING. But where is he?

ROS. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your  
pleasure.

KING. Bring him before us.

ROS. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN*

KING. Now, Hamlet, where 's Polonius?

HAM. At supper.

KING. At supper! where?

19

HAM. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a  
certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.  
Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all crea-  
tures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots:  
your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service,  
two dishes, but to one table: that 's the end.

KING. Alas, alas!

HAM. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat  
of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING. What dost thou mean by this?

21-22 *a certain convocation . . . diet*] Some commentators doubtfully  
detect in the words "worms," "emperor," and "diet," an allusion  
to the diets (*i. e.*, parliaments) of the Holy Roman Empire, which  
were frequently held in the city of Worms. The most famous of  
these imperial diets was that of 1521, when Luther appeared before  
the Emperor Charles V, and Protestantism was condemned.

26-28 *Alas, alas! . . . that worm*] Thus the Quartos. These words are  
omitted from the Folios.

HAM. Nothing but to show you how a king may go  
a progress through the guts of a beggar. 31

KING. Where is Polonius?

HAM. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*]

HAM. He will stay till you come. [*Exeunt Attendants.*]

KING. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, 40  
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done, must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;  
The bark is ready and the wind at help,  
The associates tend, and every thing is bent  
For England.

HAM. For England?

KING. Ay, Hamlet.

HAM. Good.

KING. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAM. I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for  
England! Farewell, dear mother.

31 *a progress*] the state-journey of a king.

41 *tender*] regard with tenderness.

*dearly*] bitterly.

44 *at help*] serviceable, favourable. For this use of the preposition, cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, i, 140: "at friend" *i. e.*, friendly.

45 *The associates tend*] Your companions wait. Cf. I, iii, 83, *supra*: "Your servants *tend*."

46 *For England?*] See note on III, iv, 200, *supra*.

48 *I see a cherub . . . them*] I think they are known in heaven. A cherub or angel is naturally credited with a wide range of vision.

KING. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

50

HAM. My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother. Come, for England! *[Exit.]*

KING. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;

Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:

Away! for every thing is seal'd and done

That else learns on the air: pray you, make haste.

*[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught —

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

60

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

Pays homage to us — thou mayst not coldly set

Our sovereign process; which imports at full,

By letters congruing to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;

For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

And thou must cure me: till I know 't is done,

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. *[Exit.]*

---

61 *thy free awe*] thy willing reverence, the feeling of respect voluntarily or spontaneously entertained by thee.

62-63 *coldly set Our sovereign process*] treat with indifference our royal mandate.

64 *congruing*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read, less satisfactorily, *coniuring*.

66 *hectic*] fever; rarely used as a noun.

68 *Howe'er my haps*] whatever my fortunes.



## SCENE IV — A PLAIN IN DENMARK

*Enter FORTINBRAS, a Captain and Soldiers, marching*

FOR. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;  
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras  
Craves the conveyance of a promised march  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
If that his majesty would aught with us,  
We shall express our duty in his eye;  
And let him know so.

CAP. I will do 't, my lord.

FOR. Go softly on.

*[Exeunt Fortinbras and Soldiers.]*

*Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others*

HAM. Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAP. They are of Norway, sir.

10

HAM. How purposed, sir, I pray you?

CAP. Against some part of Poland.

HAM. Who commands them, sir?

CAP. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

---

SCENE IV] Here according to some editors Act IV should rightly begin.

See note at Act IV, Sc. i, *supra*.

3 *Craves*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Claims*, which agrees better with the context.

6 *in his eye*] in his presence.

8 *softly*] gently, leisurely.

9-66 *Good sir . . . worth!]* Thus the Quartos. The whole passage is omitted from the Folios.

HAM. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,  
Or for some frontier?

CAP. Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it; 20  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole  
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAM. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAP. Yes, it is already garrison'd.

HAM. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats  
Will not debate the question of this straw:  
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,  
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without  
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir. 29

CAP. God be wi' you, sir. *[Exit.]*

ROS. Will 't please you go, my lord?

HAM. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.

*[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]*

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,

15 *the main*] the mainland, the country at large.

20 *To pay five ducats . . . farm it*] I would not pay five ducats for the right of collecting the taxes from it.

22 *A ranker rate*] A richer revenue.

27 *imposthume*] an inward swelling or abscess.

34 *market of his time*] the business which occupies his time.

36 *discourse*] reasoning faculty. Cf. I, ii, 150, *supra*: "*discourse of reason.*"

Looking before and after, gave us not  
 That capability and god-like reason  
 To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be  
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple 40  
 Of thinking too precisely on the event, —  
 A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom  
 And ever three parts coward, — I do not know  
 Why yet I live to say “this thing's to do,”  
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,  
 To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:  
 Witness this army, of such mass and charge,  
 Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
 Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd  
 Makes mouths at the invisible event, 50  
 Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
 To all that fortune, death and danger dare,  
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
 Is not to stir without great argument,  
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
 When honour 's at the stake. How stand I then,  
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
 Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
 And let all sleep, while to my shame I see  
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men, 60

39 *fust*] grow mouldy, musty.

46 *gross as earth*] large and obvious as the earth.

47 *charge*] expense.

50 *Makes mouths*] Laughs, grimaces.

55 *But greatly*] But it is an attribute of greatness.

58 *Excitements . . . blood*] Provocatives, incitements of my reason and my passion, of my mind and heart. Cf. III, ii, 67, *supra*: “blood and judgement.”

That for a fantasy and trick of fame  
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
 Which is not tomb enough and continent  
 To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [Exit.

## SCENE V - - ELSINORE

## A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, and a Gentleman

QUEEN. I will not speak with her.

GENT. She is importunate, indeed distract:  
 Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN. What would she have?

GENT. She speaks much of her father, says she hears  
 There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats her  
 heart,

Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,  
 That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,  
 Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
 The hearers to collection; they aim at it,  
 And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts; 10  
 Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,

61 *trick of fame*] capricious or whimsical point of honour or reputation.

64 *continent*] receptacle.

Sc. V (stage direction), *a Gentleman*] The Quartos alone introduce this character here. The Folios give his speeches to Horatio.

6 *Spurns enviously*] Kicks spitefully.

8 *the unshaped use of it*] its incoherence.

9 *to collection*] to the drawing of inferences.

Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

HOR. 'T were good she were spoken with, for she may  
strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN. Let her come in. [Exit Gentleman.]

[*Aside*] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

20

*Re-enter Gentleman, with OPHELIA*

OPH. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN. How now, Ophelia!

OPH. [*Sings*] How should I your true love know  
From another one?  
By his cockle hat and staff  
And his sandal shoon.

---

13 *unhappily*] mischievously.

18 *toy*] trifle.

*amiss*] disaster. The substantive "amiss" Shakespeare twice uses in the *Sonnets* in the sense of "sin" or "wrong." Cf. xxxv, 7; cli, 3.

19 *artless jealousy*] crude suspicion.

21 (stage direction) *Re-enter . . . OPHELIA*] The First Quarto has "Enter Ofelia, playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing."

23-26 *How should I . . . sandal shoon*] An old popular song not by Shakespeare, which is continued by Ophelia in lines 29-32, 34-38. The traditional music is given in Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, Vol. I, p. 236. The words are printed in Percy's *Reliques*.

25-26 *his cockle hat . . . sandal shoon*] the conventional dress of a pilgrim, who ordinarily wore a cockle-shell in his hat.

QUEEN. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPH. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[Sings] He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

30

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

Oh, oh!

QUEEN. Nay but, Ophelia, —

OPH. Pray you, mark.

[Sings] White as his shroud as the mountain snow, —

*Enter KING*

QUEEN. Alas, look here, my lord.

OPH. [Sings] Larded with sweet flowers;

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true-love showers.

KING. How do you, pretty lady?

39

OPH. Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

KING. Conceit upon her father.

36 *Larded*] Garnished, ornamented. Cf. V, ii, 20, *infra*.

37 *did go*] Pope's correction of the old misreading *did not go*.

40-41 *They say . . . daughter*] An apparent reference to the popular medieval story that Christ went into a baker's shop for some bread, and that the baker's daughter refused it, with the result that she was transformed into an owl.

43 *Conceit upon*] Thought of.

OPH. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[Sings] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.  
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes, 50  
And dupp'd the chamber-door;  
Let in the maid, that out a maid  
Never departed more.

KING. Pretty Ophelia!

OPH. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on 't:

[Sings] By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
Alack, and fie for shame!  
Young men will do't, if they come to't;  
By cock, they are to blame.  
Quoth she, before you tumbled me, 60  
You promised me to wed.

He answers:

So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,  
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

---

46-64 *To-morrow . . . to my bed*] Another old song with a traditional tune. See Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, Vol. I, p. 227. St. Valentine's day, 14 February, was from time immemorial devoted to the exchange of professions of love; "your Valentine" (line 49) means "your sweetheart."

51 *dupp'd*] opened.

56 *By Gis*] Probably "by Jesus," with some confused reference to the initial letters I H S.

59 *By cock*] By God; a common perversion.

KING. How long hath she been thus?

OPH. I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [Exit. 71]

KING. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit Horatio.]

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in battalions! First, her father slain:  
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,  
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia 81  
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:  
Last, and as much containing as all these,

---

69-70 *Come, my coach*] Much indelicate play is made of this apparently innocent expression of Ophelia in Chapman, Jonson, and Marston's *Eastward Hoe*, 1605, by the heroine Gertrude, in dialogue with Hamlet a footman in her father's service (Act III, Sc. ii, *passim*). That scene is an obvious skit on Shakespeare's treatment of Ophelia's madness. See also note on lines 191-195, *infra*.

75-76 *When sorrows come . . . battalions*] Cf. *Pericles*, I, iv, 63-64: "One sorrow never comes but brings an heir, That may succeed as his inheritor."

78 *muddied*] stirred like a turbid pool.

81 *hugger-mugger*] in secret haste.



Her brother is in secret come from France,  
 Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death;  
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,  
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign 90  
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
 Like to a murdering-piece, in many places  
 Gives me superfluous death. [A noise within.]

QUEEN. Alack, what noise is this?

KING. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the  
 door.

*Enter another Gentleman*

What is the matter?

GENT. Save yourself, my lord:  
 The ocean, overpeering of his list,  
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste  
 Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
 O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;  
 And, as the world were now but to begin, 100  
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

86 *Feeds . . . clouds*] Is bewildered by the mystery of his father's death,  
 conceals his intention. For *Feeds on his wonder* the Quartos read  
*Feed on this wonder*, and the Folios *Keeps on his wonder*.

91 *In ear and ear*] In his two ears.

92 *a murdering-piece*] a small cannon loaded with case shot, and capable  
 of a raking fire.

94 *Switzers*] the royal guards, commonly formed of Swiss mercenaries.

96 *overpeering of his list*] overflowing its boundary.

98 *in a riotous head*] leading a riotous armed force or insurrection.

The ratifiers and props of every word,  
They cry "Choose we; Laertes shall be king!"  
Caps, hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds,  
"Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!"

QUEEN. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!  
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs! [*Noise within.*]

KING. The doors are broke.

*Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following*

LAER. Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

DANES. No, let 's come in.

LAER. I pray you, give me leave.

DANES. We will, we will. [*They retire without the door.* 111]

LAER. I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,  
Give me my father!

QUEEN. Calmly, good Laertes.

LAER. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me  
bastard;

Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot  
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brows  
Of my true mother.

KING. What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?  
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would,

120

---

102 *The ratifiers and props*] These words are in apposition to "antiquity"  
and "custom." Words solely derive their warrant and support—  
all their significance—from "antiquity" and "custom."

107 *this is counter*] this is false scent; a familiar phrase in hunting.

Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,  
Why thou art thus incensed: let him go, Gertrude:  
Speak, man.

LAER. Where is my father?

KING. Dead.

QUEEN. But not by him.

KING. Let him demand his fill.

LAER. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:  
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!  
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!  
I dare damnation: to this point I stand, 130  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged  
Most thoroughly for my father.

KING. Who shall stay you?

LAER. My will, not all the world:  
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
They shall go far with little.

KING. Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge  
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,  
Winner and loser? 140

LAER. None but his enemies.

KING. Will you know them then?

---

131 *both the worlds*] this world and the next. Cf. *Macb.*, III, ii, 16: "*both the worlds* (*i. e.*, heaven and earth) suffer."

133 *thoroughly*] thoroughly.

139 *swoopstake*] sweepstake, *i. e.*, a gambler who sweeps in all the stakes. The First Quarto reads *Swoop-stake-like*. All other early editions read substantially *That soopstake*.

LAER. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;  
And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,  
Repast them with my blood.

KING. Why, now you speak  
Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgement pierce  
As day does to your eye.

DANES. [*Within*] Let her come in.

LAER. How now! what noise is that?

150

*Re-enter OPHELIA*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!  
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,  
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
O heavens! is 't possible a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
Nature is fine in love, and where 't is fine

143 *the kind life-rendering pelican*] the pelican is supposed to pierce her breast in order to feed her young with her blood. For *pelican* the First Folio has the curious misprint *Politician*.

148 *pierce*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *peare*. "As level . . . pierce" means "penetrate as straight."

149 DANES [*Within*] *Let her come in*] Capell's correction of the confused Folio reading "*A noise within. Let her come in.*" The Quartos assign "Let her come in" to Laertes.

158-160 *Nature . . . loves*] Thus the Folios. The lines are omitted from the Quartos. The passage means that, in conformity with the

It sends some precious instance of itself  
After the thing it loves.

160

OPH. [*Sings*] They bore him barefaced on the bier;  
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny:  
And in his grave rain'd many a tear, —

Fare you well, my dove!

LAER. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade re-  
venge,  
It could not move thus.

OPH. [*Sings*] You must sing down a-down,  
An you call him a-down-a.

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward,  
that stole his master's daughter.

170

LAER. This nothing's more than matter.

OPH. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance:

strict or punctilious working of Nature in matters of perfect love,  
Ophelia has sacrificed her sanity to her affection for her dead father.

159 *instance*] specimen.

161-168 *They bore him . . . a-down-a*] No external source for these lines  
has been found. They may be Shakespeare's invention, though the  
refrains "Hey nonny" and "Down a-down" are familiar elsewhere.  
Line 162, *Hey . . . nonny*: is only found in the Folios.

169 *wheel*] The word is often said without much proof to have been in  
use for "refrain" or "burden," like the Latin word "rota." Probably  
the spinning-wheel is meant, and reference made to the spinning song.

169-70 *the false steward . . . daughter*] This may be the theme of the  
ballad, but the allusion is not clear. There is possibly a vague hit at  
King Claudius's capture of Hamlet's mother, the wife of his late king  
and master.

172 *rosemary . . . remembrance*] rosemary, an emblem of remembrance,  
was carried at both weddings and funerals. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, IV, iv, 74,  
76: "rosemary and rue . . . Grace and remembrance."

pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

LAER. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPH. There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say a' made a good end, —

182

[Sings] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

LAER. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

173-174 *pansies . . . thoughts*] this flower named from the French *pensées* was commonly held to symbolise lovers' thoughts.

175 *A document in madness*] A lesson, *i. e.*, instructive example, in madness.

177 *fennel . . . columbines*] the floral emblems respectively of flattery and ingratitude.

178-179 *rue . . . o' Sundays*] The herb "rue," an emblem of repentance or grief, was popularly called "herb of grace," and might well bear so religious a name on Sundays. Cf. *Rich. II*, III, iv, 105-106: "a bank of rue, sour herb of grace: Rue, even for ruth."

180 *with a difference*] in heraldry slight variations in coats of arms to fit them for different members of the same family were technically called "differences." The queen and Ophelia have different reasons for wearing their "rue."

*daisy*] the emblem of deceit.

181 *violets*] the emblem of fidelity.

183 *For bonny . . . joy*] a line from an old ballad now lost. The tune survives in Elizabethan music-books. Cf. Queen Elizabeth's Virginal-book, and Ballet's Lute-book at Trinity College, Dublin.

184 *Thought . . . passion*] Grief . . . suffering.

185 *She turns to favour*] She transmutes into things of agreeable charm.

OPH. [*Sings*] And will a' not come again?

And will a' not come again?

No, no, he is dead,

Go to thy death-bed,

He never will come again.

190

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan:

God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi'  
you. [*Exit.*]

LAER. Do you see this, O God?

KING. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,  
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will, 200  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:  
If by direct or by collateral hand  
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,  
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,

183-195 *And will a' not . . . on his soul*] This is an old song, of which the tune survives in seventeenth-century music-books.

191-195 *His beard was as white . . . soul*] This verse is parodied in *Eastward Hoe*, 1605, by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston, III, ii, 96-100. The parody, which begins "His head as white as mylke," is sung by Gertrude, a somewhat lascivious young lady, in the presence, among others, of Hamlet, a footman. See lines 69-70, "Come, my coach!" and note.

196 *of all*] on all.

198 *commune*] The accent is on the first syllable. The word was pronounced much like *common*, which is the reading of the First Folio.

203 *touch'd*] sullied, implicated in guilt.

# HAMLET

LAER. Let this be so;  
His means of death, his obscure funeral,  
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones, 210  
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,  
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
That I must call't in question.

KING. So you shall;  
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.  
I pray you, go with me. *[Exeunt.]*

*Enter HORATIO and a Servant*

SERV. Sea-faring men, sir: they say they have letters  
for you.

I do not know from what part of the world  
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

## Enter Sailors

HOR. Let him bless thee too.

211 *ostentation*] funeral pomp.



FIRST SAIL. He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

11

HOR. [*Reads*] "Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosen-crantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

"He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET."

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;  
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*

---

11 *let to know*] informed.

13 *means*] means of access.

14-15 *appointment*] equipment.

18-19 *they knew what they did*] In all probability this means that the pirates knew Hamlet's rank, and deemed it politic to treat him gently.

22 *the bore*] the calibre of the gun, the capacity of the barrel. The general meaning of the phrase here is "words cannot do full justice to the importance of the matter."

## SCENE VII — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter KING and LAERTES*

KING. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,  
And you must put me in your heart for friend,  
Sith you have heard and with a knowing ear,  
That he which hath your noble father slain  
Pursued my life.

LAER. It well appears: but tell me  
Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
You mainly were stirr'd up.

KING. O, for two special reasons,  
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinew'd, 10  
But yet to me they're strong. The queen his mother  
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself —  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which —  
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
I could not but by her. The other motive,  
Why to a public count I might not go,  
Is the great love the general gender bear him;

7 *crimeful*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less forcibly, *criminall*.

9 *mainly were stirr'd up*] were powerfully incited to do.

14 *conjunctive*] essentially bound. The "conjunction" of planets was in the speaker's mind, as is shown by his mention of the motion of the star in the next line.

17 *public count*] public account, examination, inquiry.

18 *general gender*] common people.

Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 20  
 Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,  
 Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,  
 Would have reverted to my bow again  
 And not where I had aim'd them.

LAER. And so have I a noble father lost;  
 A sister driven into desperate terms,  
 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
 For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

KING. Break not your sleeps for that: you must not  
 think 30

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull  
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger  
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear  
 more:

I loved your father, and we love ourself;  
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine —

20 *like the spring . . . stone*] There was a spring or well at King's Newnham, in Warwickshire, Shakespeare's county, as well as at Knaresborough, which had this petrifying capacity.

21 *Convert his gyves to graces*] The king means that to imprison Hamlet would be to increase his popularity. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, II, ii, 212: "And made their bends adornings."

22 *loud a wind*] boisterous a wind. Thus the Folios; the early Quartos misprint *loued Arm'd*.

27 *if praises . . . again*] if my praises may go back to Ophelia's past days.

28 *Stood challenger . . . age*] Stood, in virtue of her perfect qualities, on the very pinnacle of contemporary merit, challenging all comers.

*Enter a Messenger, with letters*

How now! what news?

MESS. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:  
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

KING. From Hamlet! who brought them?

MESS. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:  
They were given me by Claudio; he received them 40  
Of him that brought them.

KING. Laertes, you shall hear them.  
Leave us. *[Exit Messenger.]*

*[Reads]* "High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on  
your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly  
eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the  
occasion of my sudden and more strange return.

"HAMLET."

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?  
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAER. Know you the hand? 50

KING. 'Tis Hamlet's character. "Naked"!  
And in a postscript here, he says "alone."  
Can you advise me?

LAER. I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
"Thus didest thou."

KING. If it be so, Laertes, —

---

43 *naked*] destitute.

49 *abuse*] deception.

51 *character*] handwriting.

## ACT IV

LAER. Ay, my lord;

KING. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,

LAER. My lord, I will be ruled;

KING. It falls right.

[ 164 ]

As did that one, and that in my regard  
Of the unworthiest siege.

LAER. What part is that, my lord?

KING. A very riband in the cap of youth,  
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears  
Than settled age his sables and his weeds, 80  
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy: —  
I've seen myself, and served against, the French,  
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant  
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat,  
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse  
As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured  
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought  
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,  
Come short of what he did.

LAER. A Norman was't? 90

KING. A Norman.

LAER. Upon my life, Lamond.

75-76 *that in my regard . . . siege*] that accomplishment which (of all your accomplishments) is in my view of the poorest rank. For "siege" cf. *Othello*, I, ii, 22: "men of royal *siege*."

80 *sables*] Cf. III, ii, 125, *supra*, and note.

81 *Importing . . . graveness*] Denoting health (in the case of sportive youth) and gravity (in the case of sober age).

84 *can well*] have expert ability. Thus the Quartos. The Folios absurdly read *ran well*.

87 *incorpsed and demi-natured*] incorporated into and half-amalgamated.

88 *topp'd*] surpassed.

89 *in forgery of shapes*] in my imagination or conception of his feats.

92 *Lamond*] Thus Pope. The Quartos read *Lamord*.

KING. The very same.

LAER. I know him well: he is the brooch indeed  
And gem of all the nation.

KING. He made confession of you,  
And gave you such a masterly report,  
For art and exercise in your defence,  
And for your rapier most especial,  
That he cried out, 't would be a sight indeed  
If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation, 100  
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,  
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
Now, out of this —

LAER. What out of this, my lord?

KING. Laertes, was your father dear to you?  
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart?

LAER. Why ask you this? 109

KING. Not that I think you did not love your father,  
But that I know love is begun by time,

---

93 *the brooch*] the conspicuous ornament.

95 *He made confession of you*] He made acknowledgment of your prowess.

97 *defence*] art of fencing. Cf. *As you like it*, III, iii, 54: "*defence* is better than no skill."

100 *scrimers*] fencers. Shakespeare's adaptation of the French word "*escrimeur*."

101 *motion*] pose, gesture in making the attack; a technical term in fencing. So again in line 157, *infra*.

103 *envenom with his envy*] embitter with his envy of you.

And that I see, in passages of proof,  
 Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.  
 There lives within the very flame of love  
 A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;  
 And nothing is at a like goodness still,  
 For goodness, growing to a pluriſy,  
 Dies in his own too much: that we would do  
 We ſhould do when we would; for this “would” changes 120  
 And hath abatements and delays as many  
 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents,  
 And then this “ſhould” is like a ſpendthrift ſigh,  
 That hurts by eaſing. But, to the quick o’ the ulcer:  
 Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,  
 To ſhow yourſelf your father’s ſon in deed  
 More than in words?

LAER. To cut his throat i’ the church.

KING. No place indeed ſhould murder ſanctuarize;  
 Revenge ſhould have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
 Will you do this, keep cloſe within your chamber.  
 Hamlet return’d ſhall know you are come home: 130

112 *in passages of proof*] by instances drawn from experience.

116 *still*] always, continuously.

117 *pluriſy*] plethora, excess; from the Latin “plus.” The word is in no way connected with “pleurisy.”

118 *too much*] used as a substantive meaning “excess.” Cf. *All’s Well*, III, ii, 88.

122 *a spendthrift sigh*] a sigh was thought to consume or waste the heart’s blood. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, III, ii, 97: “sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear.”

127 *sanctuarize*] make a sanctuary, protect from arrest; a sanctuary being a place where fugitives from justice were immune from arrest.



We'll put on those shall praise your excellence  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine together  
And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,  
Most generous and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice  
Requite him for your father.

LAER. I will do't;  
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword. 140  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point  
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

KING. Let's further think of this;  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means.  
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail, 150  
And that our drift look through our bad performance,  
'T were better not assay'd: therefore this project  
Should have a back or second, that might hold

---

131 *put on*] put up, instigate.

138 *unbated*] unblunted, without the protecting button.

*a pass of practice*] a treacherous thrust. For "practice," cf. line 67.

141 *a mountebank*] a quack doctor, an itinerant vendor of drugs.

143 *cataplasm*] poultice.

150 *fit us to our shape*] fit us to act our part.

If this did blast in proof. Soft! let me see:  
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings:  
 I ha't:  
 When in your motion you are hot and dry —  
 As make your bouts more violent to that end —  
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
 A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping, 160  
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
 Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

*Enter QUEEN*

How now, sweet queen!

QUEEN. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
 So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAER. Drown'd! O, where?

QUEEN. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
 There with fantastic garlands did she come  
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples, 170

154 *If this did blast in proof*] If this should burst or break down on trial.

155 *cunnings*] skill. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *commings* or *comings*, i. e., fencing bouts, a reading which is quite defensible.

157 *in your motion*] in your attack; a technical term in fencing. Cf. line 101, *supra*.

160 *for the nonce*] for the occasion.

161 *stuck*] rapier; from the French "estoc." It is also found as an abbreviation of the Anglicised Italian "stoccata," a thrust in fencing.

168 *hoar leaves*] The leaves of the willow are silvery grey on the under side. Cf. Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 13: "*glaucia Canentia fronde Salicta*."

170 *crow-flowers*] apparently gilly-flowers, but sometimes interpreted as buttercups.

*long purples*] the purple "orchis mascula."

That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:  
 There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
 When down her weedy trophies and herself  
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,  
 And mermaid-like a while they bore her up:  
 Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,  
 As one incapable of her own distress,  
 Or like a creature native and indued 180  
 Unto that element: but long it could not be  
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
 To muddy death.

LAER. Alas, then she is drown'd!

QUEEN. Drown'd, drown'd.

LAER. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
 And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet  
 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,  
 Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,  
 The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord: 190

171 *liberal*] licentious.

174 *sliver*] slip, split branch.

178 *tunes*] Thus the First Quarto and the Folios. The other Quartos read *laudes*, i. e., psalms.

179 *incapable*] insensible.

180 *native and indued*] congenital and inured. Cf. I, ii, 47, *supra*:  
 "more *native* to the heart."

188 *our trick*] our habit.

189-190 *when these are gone . . . out*] When these tears are shed, I shall  
 have overcome my womanish weakness. Cf. *Hen. V*, IV, vi, 31: "all  
 my mother came into my eyes."

I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly douts it. [Exit.

KING. Let's follow, Gertrude:  
How much I had to do to calm his rage!  
Now fear I this will give it start again;  
Therefore let's follow. [Exeunt.

---

192 *douts*] extinguishes. Knight's emendation of the First Folio reading *doubts*. The Quartos and later Folios have *drowns*.

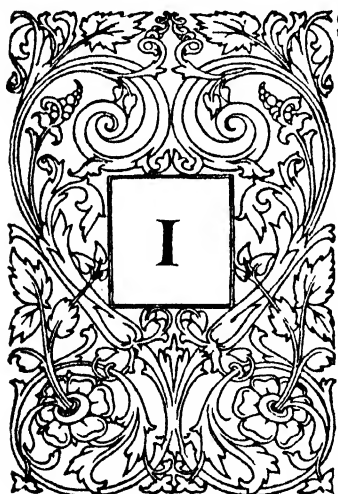


## ACT FIFTH — SCENE I

### A CHURCHYARD

*Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.*

FIRST CLOWN



S SHE TO BE BURIED  
in Christian burial that wilfully  
seeks her own salvation?

SEC. CLO. I tell thee she is;  
and therefore make her grave  
straight: the crowner hath sat  
on her, and finds it Christian  
burial.

FIRST CLO. How can that be,  
unless she drowned herself in  
her own defence?

SEC. CLO. Why, 'tis found  
so.

FIRST CLO. It must be "se offendendo;" it cannot be  
else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly,

2 *salvation*] blunder for "damnation" or "destruction."

4 *straight*] immediately, without delay.

*crowner*] coroner.

it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

13

SEC. CLO. Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver.

FIRST CLO. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

20

SEC. CLO. But is this law?

FIRST CLO. Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

SEC. CLO. Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

FIRST CLO. Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even

9 *se offendendo*] blunder for "*se defendendo*," the jury's finding in justifiable homicide.

12 *argal*] a colloquial perversion of "*ergo*," therefore.

22 *crowner's quest law*] the law governing coroner's inquests. The legal quibbling here has been held to parody a famous old case (*Hales v. Petite*, of 1561), fully reported in Plowden's contemporary *Law Latin Reports*, which investigated the conditions of the suicide, by drowning, of Sir James Hales, in which the act was subtly divided into three parts, and it was argued that "as Sir James Hales, being alive, caused Sir James Hales to die, therefore the act of the living man was the death of the dead man, for which the living man must be punished."

The legal argument throughout is a "*reductio ad absurdum*."

26 *there thou say'st*] now you speak to the purpose.

28-29 *even Christian*] ordinary fellow Christian.

Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession. 31

SEC. CLO. Was he a gentleman?

FIRST CLO. A' was the first that ever bore arms.

SEC. CLO. Why, he had none.

FIRST CLO. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged: could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself —

SEC. CLO. Go to. 40

FIRST CLO. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

SEC. CLO. The gallows-maker; for that frame out-lives a thousand tenants.

FIRST CLO. I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the galiows may do well to thee. To 't again, come. 49

SEC. CLO. "Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?"

FIRST CLO. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

SEC. CLO. Marry, now I can tell.

FIRST CLO. To 't.

SEC. CLO. Mass, I cannot tell.

---

39 *confess thyself*] The first part of a vulgar catch phrase: "confess thyself and be hanged." Cf. *Othello*, IV, i, 38, 39: "*confess and be hanged* for his labour."

52 *unyoke*] unharness, finish your day's work.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, afar off*

FIRST CLC. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for  
your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating, and  
when you are asked this question next, say "a grave-  
maker:" the houses that he makes last till doomsday.  
Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor. 60

*[Exit Sec. Clown.*

*[He digs, and sings.*

In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet,  
To contract, O, the time, for-a my behove,  
O, methought, there-a was nothing-a meet.

HAM. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that  
he sings at grave-making?

HOR. Custom hath made it in him a property of  
easiness.

60 *to Yaughan; fetch]* Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *in, and fetch.*

There is no satisfactory explanation of the word "Yaughan"; that  
there was a well-known tavern keeper of the name is unsupported,  
but may be true. It is just possible that "get thee to Yaughan" is a  
careless transcript by the ear of "get thee gone."

*stoup]* drinking cup, flagon. Cf. V, ii, 254, *infra*: "*stoups* of wine."

61-64 *In youth . . . meet]* This stanza and the two which follow, lines  
71-74, 91-94, and 116-7, all come with some textual variations from  
the poem headed "The aged lover renounceth love," by Thomas,  
Lord Vaux, Henry VIII's courtier. Vaux's poem was first printed in  
the publisher Tottel's popular poetical miscellany, 1557, called "*Songs*  
*and Sonettes*, written by the . . . late Earle of Surrey and other."

67-68 *a property of easiness]* a matter of easy familiarity.



HAM. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment  
hath the daintier sense. 70

FIRST CLO. [*Sings*] But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil the land,  
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull.*]

HAM. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing  
once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were  
Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be  
the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches;  
one that would circumvent God, might it not?

HOR. It might, my lord. 80

HAM. Or of a courtier, which could say "Good mor-  
row, sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord?" This  
might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-  
a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

HOR. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's;

71-74 *But age . . . been such*] See note on ll. 61-64, *supra*.

74 *such*] *i. e.*, a lover.

76 *jowls*] knocks or dashes.

77 *Cain's jaw-bone*] the jawbone, with which Cain was traditionally said to have slain Abel.

78 *a politician*] a crafty wirepuller. Shakespeare always uses the word in a bad sense.

*o'er-reaches*] gets the better of. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *o're-offices*, *i. e.*, domineers over as a superior officer.

82-84 *This might be . . . not?*] Cf. *Tim. of Ath.*, I, ii, 208-210: "And now I remember, my lord, you gave good words the other day of a bay courser I rode on; it is yours, because you liked it."

chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on 't. 90

FIRST CLO. [*Sings*] A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

[*Throws up another skull.*]

HAM. There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is

87 *mazzard*] skull.

90 *loggats*] a game something like bowls, in which small logs or cones of apple-wood are aimed from a distance at a wooden jack.

91-94 *A pick-axe . . . is meet*] See note on ll. 61-64, *supra*.

96 *quiddities*] subtle niceties.

97 *quilllets*] quibbles.

99 *sconce*] head.

101-102 *his statutes . . . recoveries*] These are technical legal terms; "statutes" and "recognizances" were different forms of legal bonds, which are often found mentioned together in the covenants of a deed of purchase; "fines" and "recoveries" were legal processes for rendering ownership incontestable. (Cf. *Com. of Errors*, II, ii, 73.) "Double vouchers" means suretyship of exceptional validity in which two persons instead of one pledged their bond.

this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

HOR. Not a jot more, my lord.

HAM. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins? 110

HOR. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

HAM. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

FIRST CLO. Mine, sir.

[Sings] O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

HAM. I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in 't.

FIRST CLO. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore 't is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine. 120

103 *the fine of his fines*] the end or ultimate issue of his fines. Cf. *All's Well*, IV, iv, 35: "the *fine's* the crown."

104 *fine pate . . . fine dirt*] "fine" which has just been used as a noun in the two senses of "end" and "legal process," now appears as an adjective in the sense first of "splendid," and then of "small" or "finely powdered."

106 *a pair of indentures*] a deed in duplicate; two copies of a deed, both written on the same sheet of paper or parchment, with the two instruments separated from one another by an indented line.

107 *conveyances*] legal deeds of conveyance.

108 *the inheritor*] the owner, the possessor.

113 *assurance*] a further legal quibbling, "assurance" being often used for a deed of conveyance, engrossed on parchment.

116-7 *O, a pit . . . is meet*] See note on ll. 61-64, *supra*.

HAM. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine: 't is for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

FIRST CLO. 'T is a quick lie, sir; 't will away again, from me to you.

HAM. What man dost thou dig it for?

FIRST CLO. For no man, sir.

HAM. What woman then?

FIRST CLO. For none, neither.

HAM. Who is to be buried in 't?

130

FIRST CLO. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

HAM. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, this three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

FIRST CLO. Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last king Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras. 140

122 *the quick*] the living.

133 *absolute*] precise.

133-134 *by the card*] with precision. The phrase is said to allude to the shipman's card (Cf. *Macb.*, I, iii, 17), on which all the points of the compass were minutely indicated.

134 *equivocation*] casuistry, ambiguity.

135 *this three years*] The First Quarto has *this seven years*. Probably no very definite period is intended. Hamlet apparently means that pedantic preciseness in popular speech is comparatively a new fashion.

136 *picked*] select, refined, smart. Cf. *K. John*, I, i, 193: "My *picked* man of countries."

137 *kibe*] chilblain.

HAM. How long is that since?

FIRST CLO. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was that very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAM. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

FIRST CLO. Why, because a' was mad: a' shall recover his wits there; or, if a' do not, 't is no great matter there.

HAM. Why?

FIRST CLO. 'T will not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

150

HAM. How came he mad?

FIRST CLO. Very strangely, they say.

HAM. How "strangely"?

---

143 *that very day that young Hamlet was born*] This passage, coupled with the clown's remark, "I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years" (lines 155-156, *infra*) seems to prove that Shakespeare intended Hamlet to be a man of thirty, an age which it is not easy to reconcile with the design ascribed to the prince (I, ii, 113, *supra*) of going back to school at Wittenberg. The First Quarto omits these two indications in the present scene of Hamlet's age, but notes that the fool, Yorick, with whom Hamlet says he played as a child, had been dead no more than "a dozen years" instead of "three and twenty," which is the accepted text of line 169, *infra* (in all the later editions). On these discrepancies is based the theory that Shakespeare, when first drafting the play, designed Hamlet's age to be under twenty, but increased it by eleven years when revising the piece. Some confusion must be admitted. But it would seem that Hamlet's fertility of thought accords better with ripe manhood than with early youth, and his studious temper might well render academic life congenial to him long after his first youth was past. There is contemporary evidence that students of Danish universities often remained there to the age of thirty.

FIRST CLO. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAM. Upon what ground?

FIRST CLO. Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAM. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

FIRST CLO. I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die — as we have many pocky corpses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in — a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

163

HAM. Why he more than another?

FIRST CLO. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here 's a skull now: this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

HAM. Whose was it?

170

FIRST CLO. A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

HAM. Nay, I know not.

FIRST CLO. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

HAM. This?

FIRST CLO. E'en that.

178

---

155 *Upon what ground?*] From what cause.

169 *three and twenty years*] Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto, which reads *a dozen years*. Probably the transcriber of the First Quarto made a careless error. Otherwise we must assume that Shakespeare in revising the piece deliberately added eleven years to Hamlet's age, increasing it from some nineteen years to some thirty.

HAM. Let me see. [*Takes the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chop-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing. 190

HOR. What's that, my lord?

HAM. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

HOR. E'en so.

HAM. And smelt so? pah! [*Puts down the skull.*]

HOR. E'en so, my lord.

HAM. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole? 199

HOR. 'T were to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAM. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander re-

---

179 *Yorick*] The name is apparently formed from the Danish Jörg, *i. e.*, George.

188 *chamber*] Thus the First Quarto and the Folios. The other Quartos read *table*, *i. e.*, dressing-table.

189 *favour*] complexion.

202 *with modesty enough*] without any exaggeration.

turneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:  
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw! 210

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

*Enter Priests, &c. in procession: the Corpse of Ophelia, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING, QUEEN, their trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life: 't was of some estate.

Couch we awhile, and mark. [Retiring with Horatio.

LAER. What ceremony else?

HAM. That is Laertes, a very noble youth: mark.

LAER. What ceremony else?

FIRST PRIEST. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged

As we have warranty: her death was doubtful; 221

210 *flaw*] gust of cold wind.

215 *Fordo*] Destroy.

*its own*] Thus the Sixth Quarto (1676). All the early editions give the older form *it own*. The Third and Fourth Folios read *it's*.

216 *Couch*] Bend down.

221 *warranty*] Thus substantially all the early editions, save the First Folio, which has the less common form *warrantis*. The latter word is found in *Sonnet* cl, 7, and *1 Hen. VI*, I, iii, 13.



And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
 She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
 Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,  
 Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her:  
 Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,  
 Her maiden strewments and the bringing home  
 Of bell and burial.

LAER. Must there no more be done?

FIRST PRIEST. No more be done:  
 We should profane the service of the dead 230  
 To sing a requiem and such rest to her  
 As to peace-parted souls.

LAER. Lay her i' the earth:  
 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
 May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
 A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
 When thou liest howling.

HAM. What, the fair Ophelia!

QUEEN. [*Scattering flowers*] Sweets to the sweet: farewell!  
 I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
 I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
 And not have strew'd thy grave.

226 *crants*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Rites*. "Crants" means garlands; from the German "kranz." It is rare in English, but is found in lowland Scotch and English provincial dialects.

227 *maiden strewments*] the flowers commonly strewn over a maiden's coffin. Cf. *Cymb.*, IV, ii, 286: "*strewings* fit'st for graves."

227-228 *the bringing home . . . burial*] the bringing to the last home (*i. e.*, the grave) with the ringing of the bell and other ceremonies of burial.

232 *peace-parted*] departed in peace.

LAER.

O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head  
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
 Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth a while,  
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[Leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
 Till of this flat a mountain you have made  
 To o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head  
 Of blue Olympus.

HAM. [Advancing] What is he whose grief  
 Bears such an emphasis: whose phrase of sorrow  
 Conjures the wandering stars and makes them stand 250  
 Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
 Hamlet the Dane.

[Leaps into the grave.]

LAER. The devil take thy soul! [Grappling with him.]

HAM.

Thou pray'st not well.

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
 For, though I am not splenitive and rash,

240 *treble woe*] Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads unintelligibly  
*terrible woer*.

241 *treble*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *double*.

242 *thy most ingenious sense*] thy reason.

247-248 *old Pelion . . . Olympus*] To these classical types of lofty  
 mountains "Ossa" is added at line 277, *infra*. The three mountains  
 are similarly mentioned together in Ovid's *Metam.*, I, 154-155: in  
 Golding's translation the words run obscurely thus: "Jove's thunder-  
 bolt the ayrie tops of high Olympus break, And pressed Pelion  
 violently from under Ossa strake," *i. e.*, (the bolt) hit Pelion, being  
 struck or rebounding off Ossa.

250 *the wandering stars*] the planets.

255 *splenitive*] subject to fits of spleen or anger.

Yet have I in me something dangerous,  
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

KING. Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN. Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL. Gentlemen, —

HOR. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

HAM. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme  
Until my eyelids will no longer wag. 261

QUEEN. O my son, what theme?

HAM. I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers  
Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

KING. O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN. For love of God, forbear him.

HAM. 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do:  
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear  
thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile? 270

I'll do 't. Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

269 *Woo't*] Wilt thou, or wouldst thou.

270 *eisel*] The Second and later Quartos read *Esill*. The Folios read *Esile* (in italics). Eisel is no doubt intended. That word is common in the sense of "vinegar," and here stands for any bitter and nauseous drink, as "crocodile" in the next clause stands for repulsive food. In *Sonnet* cxi, 10, "Potions of *eisel*" (spelt *Eysell* in the Quarto, 1609), stands for strong, repulsive medicine. There may possibly be some reminiscence of the draft of vinegar or gall offered to Christ on the Cross. Cf. *Matthew*, xxvii, 48, where, for "vinegar" of the Authorized Version, Eisele, or aysile, or eysel appears in earlier English translations.

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
 And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
 Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
 Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
 I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN. This is mere madness:  
 And thus a while the fit will work on him;  
 Anon, as patient as the female dove 280  
 When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
 His silence will sit drooping.

HAM. Hear you, sir;  
 What is the reason that you use me thus?  
 I loved you ever: but it is no matter;  
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [Exit.

KING. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[Exit Horatio.

[To Laertes] Strengthen your patience in our last night's  
 speech;

We'll put the matter to the present push.  
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son. 290  
 This grave shall have a living monument:

281 *her golden couplets*] The pigeon lays two eggs, and when hatched or  
 "disclosed" the fledglings are covered with a yellow or golden down.

286 *cat . . . day*] a common proverb, meaning that things will take their  
 appointed course, however potent the effort made to divert them.

289 *the present push*] the immediate test or issue.

291 *a living monument*] The expression has here a double sense. The  
 king means the queen to understand "an enduring or lasting memo-  
 rial." But he is thinking of his plot with Laertes to sacrifice Hamlet's  
 life by way of requital for Ophelia's death.

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE II—A HALL IN THE CASTLE

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO*

HAM. So much for this, sir: now shall you see the  
other;

You do remember all the circumstance?

HOR. Remember it, my lord!

HAM. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,  
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometime serves us well  
When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends, 10  
Rough-hew them how we will.

HOR. That is most certain.

HAM. Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,

---

6 *mutines*] mutineers. See note on III, iv, 83, *supra*.

*bilboes*] steel fetters or stocks for the ankles, manufactured at Bilboa in Spain, and employed to confine mutinous sailors at sea.

9 *pall*] grow tasteless or worthless. Thus the Second Quarto and the Folios. Later Quartos read *fall*.

13 *sea-gown*] a sailor's dress, high collared and short sleeved, reaching to the knees.

Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew  
 To mine own room again; making so bold,  
 My fears forgetting manners, to unseal  
 Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio, —  
 O royal knavery! — an exact command,  
 Larded with many several sorts of reasons, 20  
 Importing Denmark's health and England's too,  
 With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,  
 That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,  
 No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
 My head should be struck off.

HOR. Is 't possible?

HAM. Here's the commission: read it at more  
 leisure.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HOR. I beseech you.

HAM. Being thus be-netted round with villanies, —  
 Or I could make a prologue to my brains, 30  
 They had begun the play, — I sat me down;

<sup>20</sup> *Larded*] Garnished, ornamented. Cf. IV, v, 36, *supra*.

<sup>21</sup> *Importing*] Affecting.

<sup>22</sup> *With, ho! . . . in my life*] With notes of such alarming consequences if I were suffered to live. "Bugs" often means "bugbears," objects of terror.

<sup>23</sup> *on the supervise, no leisure bated*] at the first glance, without any loss of time.

<sup>29</sup> *villanies*] The early editions read *villaines*, for which Theobald substituted *villainy* and Capell *villanies*, which improves the metre.

<sup>30-31</sup> *Or . . . play*] The Quartos read *Or*, an archaic form of *Ere*, which is the reading of the Folios. The lines mean "Before I could summon my thinking faculties to devise a preliminary plan, my brains (involuntarily) began to act, to take decisive action."

Devised a new commission; wrote it fair:  
 I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
 A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much  
 How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
 It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know  
 The effect of what I wrote?

HOR. Ay, good my lord.

HAM. An earnest conjuration from the king,  
 As England was his faithful tributary,  
 As love between them like the palm might flourish,  
 As peace should still her wheaten garland wear  
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities,  
 And many such-like "As" es of great charge,  
 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
 Without debatement further, more or less,  
 He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
 Not shriving-time allow'd.

HOR. How was this seal'd?

HAM. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.  
 I had my father's signet in my purse,

33 *statists*] statesmen.

42 *a comma*] a connecting link. Thus the early editions, for which many emendations have been needlessly suggested. "Comma" is implicitly contrasted with "period" or full stop, the punctuation mark of disjunction.

43 "*As'es*"] A quibble on "as" the conditional particle and "ass" the beast of burden.

*of great charge*] of great weight or force.

44 *knowing of*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *know of*; "knowing" must be pronounced monosyllabically.

47 *shriving-time*] time for confession and absolution. Cf. *Rich. III*, III, ii, 116: "*shriving* work."

Which was the model of that Danish seal: 50  
 Folded the writ up in the form of the other;  
 Subscribed it; gave 't the impression; placed it safely,  
 The changeling never known. Now, the next day  
 Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent  
 Thou know'st already.

HOR. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't.

HAM. Why, man, they did make love to this em-  
 ployment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat  
 Does by their own insinuation grow:  
 'T is dangerous when the baser nature comes 60  
 Between the pass and fell incensed points  
 Of mighty opposites.

HOR. Why, what a king is this!

HAM. Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me now upon —  
 He that hath kill'd my king, and whored my mother;  
 Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;  
 Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
 And with such cozenage — is 't not perfect conscience,

50 *model*] copy.

56 *go to 't*] reach their end.

58-59 *their defeat . . . grow*] their ruin is a fruit of their intermeddling  
 or intrusion.

61 *pass*] thrust.

62 *opposites*] foes, opponents, hostile forces.

63 *Does it not . . . now upon*] Is it not my imperative business, does it  
 not seem to thee — For *thinks't thee* the Folios read *think'st thee*,  
 and the Quartos *thinke thee*. "Think" in the sense of "seem"  
 is a different word from "think" in the ordinary sense of  
 "perceive."

66 *angle*] line; often use of fishing-line.



To quit him with this arm? and is 't not to be damn'd,  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil? 70

HOR. It must be shortly known to him from England  
What is the issue of the business therè.

HAM. It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say "One."  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself;  
For, by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours:  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

HOR. Peace! who comes here? 80

*Enter OSRIC*

OSR. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAM. I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

68-80 *To quit . . . here?*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the passage.

68 *quit him*] requite him, punish him, pay him out.

69-70 *come In further evil*] proceed further in villany.

73 *the interim is mine*] I'll put the interval to my own advantage (for the crisis is at hand).

77-78 *For, by the image . . . of his*] Laertes, like Hamlet, has lost both a father and Ophelia.

78 *court*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *count*.

79 *bravery*] bravado ostentation.

83 *water-fly*] This insect dances aimlessly over the surface of the water, and is therefore emblematic of a busy trifler.

HOR. No, my good lord.

HAM. Thy state is the more gracious, for 't is a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 't is a chough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt. 8.

OSR. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

HAM. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 't is for the head.

OSR. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

HAM. No, believe me, 't is very cold; the wind is northerly.

OSR. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

HAM. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion — 99

OSR. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as 't were, — I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter —

HAM. I beseech you, remember —

[*Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.*]

88 *king's mess*] king's private table.

*chough*] Some interpret it a jackdaw. But the word may be a spelling of "chuff," a term often applied to a rich boor.

98-99 *or my complexion*] Thus substantially the Second and later Quartos. Hamlet apparently was about to end his sentence with some such words as "deceives me." The Folios quite satisfactorily read "for my complexion."

104 *remember*] The full conventional phrase is "remember thy courtesy," which meant in this connection "keep your hat on." Cf. *L.L.L.*, V, i, 84-85, and note.

OSR. Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see. 111

HAM. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion

105 *for mine ease*] apparently an affected colloquialism of courtesy; a conventional justification for standing bareheaded.

106-141 *Sir, here is newly come . . . unfellowed*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios make Osric substitute for these six-and-thirty lines the fourteen words *Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon*.

107 *absolute*] consummate, perfect.

*excellent differences*] distinctive excellences.

109 *feelingly*] with sympathetic perception.

*the card or calendar of gentry*] the true pattern or guide of gentility.

110-111 *the continent . . . see*] the map or receptacle of every accomplishment that a gentleman would look for.

112 *his definement . . . in you*] his description loses nothing at your hands.

113 *to divide him inventorially*] to distinguish all his qualities in the manner of a schedule or inventory.

114 *yet but yaw*] Thus the Second Quarto. The other Quartos read *yet but raw*. "Yaw" is a nautical word, meaning stagger, move unsteadily. The passage means that the arithmetical power which is needed to enumerate Laertes' excellences would stagger, or totter, in face of their brilliant variety, and quick vivacity. Hamlet is parodying Osric's euphuistic extravagances.

116 *a soul of great article*] a soul of large comprehension, of large volume.

of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

OSR. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him. 120

HAM. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

OSR. Sir?

HOR. Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do 't, sir, really.

HAM. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSR. Of Laertes?

HOR. His purse is empty already; all 's golden words are spent. 130

HAM. Of him, sir.

OSR. I know you are not ignorant —

HAM. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

OSR. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —

117 *infusion . . . dearth*] endowments of such dearness or high value.

118-119 *his semblable . . . nothing more*] his likeness can only be found in his mirror; and nothing save his own shadow could keep pace with him (none but himself can be his parallel).

121 *concernancy*] pertinence.

124-125 *Is 't not possible . . . really*] Is it not possible to make oneself intelligible in another and more ordinary manner of speech? You really could manage to do it if you tried. Cf. Horatio's next speech: "All 's golden words are spent."

126 *What imports the nomination*] What is the name of.

134 *approve me*] commend me, be to my credit.

HAM. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself. 139

OSR. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

HAM. What's his weapon?

OSR. Rapier and dagger.

HAM. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

OSR. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit. 150

137-139 *I dare not . . . know himself*] Hamlet dare not confess full knowledge of Laertes' excellences, lest he should seem to claim for himself equal worth; a man can only know of another that which he knows of himself.

140-141 *in the imputation . . . by them*] but according to the reputation assigned him by people in general, he is unequalled in the praise bestowed on him as a swordsman.

146 *imponed*] staked. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *impaund*, which Osric may have affectedly pronounced like "imponed." See line 160, *infra*.

147-148 *assigns, as . . . hanger*] appendages, appurtenances, such as the strap which attaches the sword to the girdle. Thus the Quartos. For *hanger* the Folios read *hangers*. There were usually more swordstraps than one. See lines 154, 157, *infra*.

148 *the carriages*] apparently the "hangers" or "swordstraps." Cf. line 154, *infra*.

149-150 *dear to . . . hilts*] pleasing to the taste, harmonising well with the ornament of the hilts.

150 *liberal conceit*] handsome, elaborate design. Cf. line 158, *infra*, *liberal-conceited*.

HAM. What call you the carriages?

HOR. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

OSR. The carriages sir, are the hangers.

HAM. The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry a cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this "imponed," as you call it?

160

OSR. The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAM. How if I answer "no"?

152-153 *I knew . . . done*] Thus the Quartos. The words are omitted from the Folios.

152 *edified by the margent*] instructed by the marginal notes or commentary.

155 *germane*] appropriate.

161-163 *The king, sir . . . twelve for nine*] According to the First Quarto (1603), the wager is that Laertes "in twelve venies," i. e., bouts, does "not get three oddes of" Hamlet. Osric does not express himself quite clearly. In the first place the king penalises Laertes by wagering that in a dozen bouts or passes his hits will not exceed Hamlet's hits by three. In order to win the wager, Laertes therefore must win eight out of the twelve bouts. He will lose the wager if Hamlet make five hits to his seven. Cf. lines 203 and 253-255, *infra*. "Twelve for nine" (or four to three) forms the terms of a bet laid by the king against Laertes' chances of victory; they are independent of the number of passes or hits in the encounter.

165 *vouchsafe the answer*] accept the challenge.

OSR. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAM. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSR. Shall I redeliver you e'en so?

HAM. To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

OSR. I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAM. Yours, yours. [*Exit Osric*] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for 's turn.

HOR. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head. 181

HAM. He did comply with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he — and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on — only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through

170 *breathing time*] time for recreation or exercise.

180–181 *This lapwing . . . head*] It was a common belief that the lapwing was in such a hurry to be hatched that it ran about at birth with the shell on its head. Horatio means that Osric is still in his first infancy. The lapwing was also identified with insincerity.

182 *comply with*] exchange compliments, stand upon ceremony with. Cf. II, ii, 368, *supra*.

183 *many more of the same breed*] Thus the Quartos. For *many* the First Folio reads *mine*, the other Folios *nine*. All the Folios read *beavy* for *breed*.

185 *outward . . . encounter*] exterior politeness of address.

186 *ysty collection*] frothy collection of empty phrases.

the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*Enter a Lord*

LORD. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAM. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

LORD. The king and queen and all are coming down.

HAM. In happy time.

LORD. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAM. She well instructs me.

[*Exit Lord.* 200

HOR. You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAM. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the

---

187 *fond and winnowed*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, unintelligibly, *prophane and trennowed* (or *trennowned*); "fond" means foolish or affected; "winnowed," sifted, refined. For *fond*, *profound* has been suggested. As it stands the passage means that the frothy kind of prattle of Osric and his like satisfies their ordinary needs and passes muster in the judgment both of the thoughtless and of men of refined wit. Such prattlers speciously deceive most people. But if you put them to any genuine test, they are burst bubbles.

197 *In happy time*] Like the French "*à la bonne heure*," in good time, betimes, early.

203 *win at the odds*] a reference to the handicap of three points by which the king has penalised Laertes. See note on lines 161-163, *supra*. Cf. *Rich. II*, I, i, 62-63: "I would allow him *odds*, and meet him."



odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all 's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

HOR. Nay, good my lord, —

HAM. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HOR. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestal their repair hither, and say you are not fit. 210

HAM. Not a whit; we defy augury: there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 't is not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, and Lords, OSRIC and other Attendants with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it*

KING. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

*[The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.]*

HAM. Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong; But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

220

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd

207-208 *gain-giving*] misgiving.

211 *defy*] disclaim, renounce.

214-215 *since no man . . . leaves, what*] Thus substantially the Folios, though with somewhat different punctuation. The early Quartos read *since no man of ought he leaves, knowes what*. The present text seems to mean "since no man has a really secure hold of what he must leave behind him at death, why should he complain of taking leave of it early."

220 *This presence*] This audience, great assembly.

With sore distraction. What I have done,  
 That might your nature, honour and exception  
 Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.  
 Was 't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:  
 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,  
 And when he 's not himself does wrong Laertes,  
 Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.  
 Who does it then? His madness: if 't be so,  
 Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd; 230  
 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.  
 Sir, in this audience,  
 Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil  
 Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,  
 That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,  
 And hurt my brother.

LAER. I am satisfied in nature,  
 Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
 To my revenge: but in my terms of honour  
 I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation,  
 Till by some elder masters of known honour 240  
 I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
 To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time  
 I do receive your offer'd love like love  
 And will not wrong it.

HAM. I embrace it freely,

223 *exception*] disapproval. Cf. *All's Well*, I, ii, 40: "*Exception* bid him speak."

236 *brother*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios absurdly read *Mother*.

240 *Till . . . honour*] Till some experts in the accepted code of honour give me an opinion and indicate a precedent justifying peace, which shall preserve my good name from injury.

And will this brother's wager frankly play.  
Give us the foils. Come on.

LAER. Come, one for me.

HAM. I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAER. You mock me, sir.

HAM. No, by this hand.

250

KING. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin  
Hamlet,

You know the wager?

HAM. Very well, my lord;

Your grace has laid the odds o' the weaker side.

KING. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:  
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

LAER. This is too heavy; let me see another.

HAM. This likes me well. These foils have all a  
length? *[They prepare to play.]*

OSR. Ay, my good lord.

KING. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.

247 *foil*] set off; a quibble.

248 *darkest*] Thus all the editions save the second and later Folios, which read *brightest*.

249 *Stick fiery off*] Stand out in bright relief.

253 *Your grace . . . odds o' the weaker side*] The king has laid a bet twelve to nine (or four to three) against Laertes and in Hamlet's favour. Cf. line 163 *seq.*, *supra*.

255 *But since . . . odds*] The word "odds" is used here in the sense of "handicap" and not in that of "a betting advantage" as in line 253, *supra*. The king means that since Laertes has improved as a fencer, it is right to handicap him. Cf. lines 161-163, *supra*.

259 *stoups*] large drinking-cups or flagons. Cf. V, i, 67, *supra*.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit, 260  
 Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
 Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;  
 The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
 And in the cup an union shall he throw,  
 Richer than that which four successive kings  
 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
 The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,  
 "Now the king drinks to Hamlet." Come, begin; 270  
 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAM. Come on, sir.

LAER. Come, my lord. [*They play.*]

HAM. One.

LAER. No.

HAM. Judgement.

OSR. A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAER. Well; again.

KING. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is  
 thine;

261 *quit . . . exchange*] requite Laertes or pay him home in the encounter of the third bout.

264 *union*] a large pearl of exceptional quality; a common usage. Thus the Folios. The Second Quarto has *Vnice*, which later Quartos translate into *Onyx*. Cf. line 318, *infra*.

267 *kettle*] kettledrum.

274 *this pearl is thine*] The king, under pretence of dropping the pearl or union (line 264, *supra*) into the cup, really drops poison. This Hamlet suspects afterwards. Cf. line 318, *infra*, "is thy union here?"

Here's to thy health. [*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*]

Give him the cup.

HAM. I'll play this bout first; set it by a while.

Come. [*They play*] Another hit; what say you?

LAER. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING. Our son shall win.

QUEEN. He's fat and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows: 280

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAM. Good madam!

KING. Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

KING. [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

HAM. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

QUEEN. Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAER. My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING. I do not think 't.

LAER. [*Aside*] And yet it is almost against my conscience.

278 *A touch, a touch*] Something less than a "hit." Thus the Folios. The words are omitted by the Quartos.

279 *He's fat . . . breath*] Thus all the early editions. Some modern editors substitute *faint* or *hot* for *fat*. But Hamlet's sedentary student life might easily tend to corpulence. A stage tradition makes these words apply to Richard Burbage, the creator of the part of Hamlet. In one form of an elegy on Burbage, the expression "scant of breath" is applied to him in his rendering of the rôle of "young" Hamlet.

280 *napkin*] handkerchief.

282 *Good madam!*] The note of exclamation is Dyce's needless interpolation. Hamlet is merely courteously acknowledging the queen's toast. His words come to nothing more than "Thank you, madam."

HAM. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;  
I pray you, pass with your best violence; 290  
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

LAER. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*]

OSR. Nothing, neither way.

LAER. Have at you now!

*[Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.]*

KING. Part them; they are incensed.

HAM. Nay, come, again. [*The Queen falls.*]

OSR. Look to the queen there, ho!

HOR. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

OSR. How is't, Laertes?

LAER. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,  
Osric; I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAM. How does the queen?

KING. She swounds to see them bleed.

QUEEN. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my dear  
Hamlet, — 301

The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [*Dies.*]

290 *pass*] make the thrust.

291 *make a wanton of me*] treat me like a spoilt child.

294 (stage direction) *Laertes . . . Laertes*] This is Rowe's emendation. In the First Quarto the stage direction runs: *They catch one anothers Rapiers, and both are wounded, Laertes falls downe, the Queene falls downe and dies.* The other Quartos omit all stage direction here. The Folios merely read *In scuffling they change Rapiers.*

298 *as a woodcock . . . springe*] See note on I, iii, 115, *supra*: "*springes* (i. e., traps) to catch *woodcocks*." Woodcocks were proverbially foolish birds.

HAM. O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:  
Treachery! seek it out. [*Laertes falls.*]

LAER. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;  
No medicine in the world can do thee good,  
In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice  
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie, 310  
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:  
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

HAM. The point envenom'd too!  
Then, venom, to thy work. [*Stabs the King.*]

ALL. Treason! treason!

KING. O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

HAM. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned  
Dane,

Drink off this potion: is thy union here?

Follow my mother. [*King dies.*]

LAER. He is justly served;  
It is a poison temper'd by himself. 320  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
Nor thine on me! [*Dies.*]

HAM. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.  
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!  
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

---

309 *Unbated*] Unblunted, with the button off. Cf. IV, vii, 138, *supra*:  
"sword unbated."

318 *thy union*] the pearl mentioned at line 264, *supra*. Thus the First  
Quarto and the Folios. The other Quartos read *the Onyx*.

320 *temper'd*] mixed.

That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
 Had I but time — as this fell sergeant, death,  
 Is strict in his arrest — O, I could tell you —  
 But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;  
 Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
 To the unsatisfied

330

HOR. Never believe it:  
 I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:  
 Here's yet some liquor left.

HAM. As thou'rt a man,  
 Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have 't.  
 O good Horatio, what a wounded name,  
 Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
 Absent thee from felicity a while,  
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
 To tell my story. [March afar off, and shot within.

340

What warlike noise is this?

OSR. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from  
 Poland,  
 To the ambassadors of England gives  
 This warlike volley.

---

327 *mutes*] dumb performers in a play. Cf. stage direction for the *Dumb Show*, III, ii, 130, *supra*: "The poisoner, with some two or three *mutes*, comes in again."

328 *fell sergeant, death*] The bailiff or sheriff's officer was often called a "sergeant." For the figure cf. *Sonnet* lxxiv, 1-2: "when that *fell arrest Without all bail* shall carry me away."

336 *O good Horatio*] Thus the Folios. The Second and later Folios read *O god Horatio*.

339 *felicity*] the joys of heaven.



HAM. O, I die, Horatio;  
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:  
 I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
 But I do prophesy the election lights  
 On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;  
 So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
 Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [*Dies.* 350

HOR. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet  
 prince,  
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! [*March within.*  
 Why does the drum come hither?

*Enter FORTINBRAS, and the English Ambassadors, with drum,  
 colours, and Attendants*

FORT. Where is this sight?

HOR. What is it you would see?  
 If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

FORT. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,  
 What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,

345 *o'er-crows*] overcomes, like the victorious cock in a cock fight.

349-350 *the occurrents . . . solicited*] the incidents, greater and smaller,  
 which have promoted (the situation). Apparently the sentence is  
 interrupted.

356 *This quarry*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read, less satisfactorily,  
*His quarry*. The phrase means, this heap of dead (game) proclaims  
 or plainly announces an indiscriminate slaughter. "Cry havoc" (cf.  
*Jul. Caes.*, III, i, 274) means "give order for no quarter." But "cry  
 on havoc" means "calls out or proclaims that havoc is in progress,"  
 as in *Othello*, V, i, 48: "whose noise is this that *cries on* (*i. e.*, calls  
 out or proclaims) murder?"

357 *toward*] at hand, imminent. Cf. *As you like it*, V, iv, 35: "another  
 flood *toward*."

*eternal*] used like "infernal." Cf. I, v, 21, *supra*.

That thou so many princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?

FIRST AMB.                   The sight is dismal;  
And our affairs from England come too late:                   360  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:  
Where should we have our thanks?

HOR.                                       Not from his mouth  
Had it the ability of life to thank you:  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,  
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view;                   370  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about: so shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I  
Truly deliver.

364 *from his mouth*] from the king's mouth.

367 *so jump upon . . . question*] so close, prompt, upon this theme of tragedy.

373 *carnal*] incestuous.

375 *put on . . . forced cause*] instigated by trickery and stratagem that circumstances compelled. Cf. line 29 *seq.*, *supra*, where Hamlet explains his plot against the lives of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. For *forced cause*, the Folio reading, the Quartos give *for no cause*.

376 *in this upshot*] in this conclusion of the tragedy.

FORT. Let us haste to hear it,  
 And call the noblest to the audience.  
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune: 380  
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

HOR. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:  
 But let this same be presently perform'd,  
 Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance  
 On plots and errors happen.

FORT. Let four captains  
 Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;  
 For he was likely, had he been put on,  
 To have proved most royally: and, for his passage, 390  
 The soldiers' music and the rites of war  
 Speak loudly for him.  
 Take up the bodies: such a sight as this  
 Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.  
 Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the bodies:  
 after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.]

381 *rights of memory*] rights founded on remembered tradition.

384 *from his mouth . . . more*] from Hamlet's mouth whose vote or  
 suffrage will lead others to second it. The reference is to Hamlet's  
 dying words of Fortinbras, at line 348, *supra*: "he has my dying  
 voice."

387 *On plots*] On the top of plots.

389 *put on*] put to the test.

390 *for his passage*] as for his passing away, his dying.





# TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY WALTER RALEIGH  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPICE BY W. H. MARGETSON



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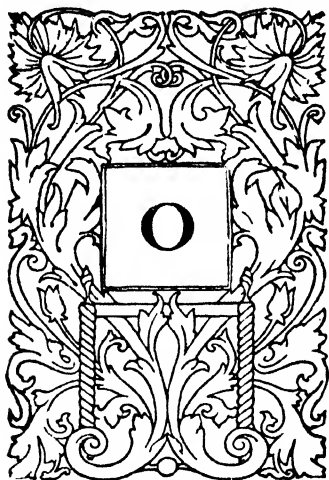
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## INTRODUCTION



F all Shakespeare's plays, none presents a more formidable array of difficulties to the student of his mind and art than this "tragical-comical-historical poem unlimited" of "Troilus and Cressida"; and these difficulties are not invented by the critics. A simple reader, who approaches the play with no other desire than to hear a moving story well told, will find himself stumbled before he reaches the end of it.

A story there is — one which had already, before Shakespeare's time, been told by the greatest story-teller among English poets. But here it is not told frankly; it is interrupted continually by the insinuations of hostile criticism, and the narrator seems to speak with a mocking voice. Chaucer's poem is a tale of love and fate,

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of amiable and pitiful human frailty sunning itself for a brief season, and broken by the wind of adversity. Shakespeare's play is a riddle, a two-edged satire on love and politics, a carnival of doubt and denial, a romance of the charnel-house of life, where "cold hopes swarm like worms within the living clay." He who in many of his plays asks for sympathy for all his characters, here seems to ask for sympathy for none. He stands aside, while the blended motives of human life — love, pride, ambition, loyalty — pass before him in review, and in each of them he finds something scandalous. The very spirit of criticism, which prompts men to stand aside, does not escape condemnation; it is ennobled in Hamlet, it is made infinitely delightful in Falstaff; in Thersites it is exhibited as the spirit of the deformed cur. There is none that doeth good, no, not one; and there is no day of judgment.

It is worth while to examine more in detail the impression that this play leaves upon the reader. The heroine, Cressida, is a marvel among Shakespeare's creations — a woman merely base. She is judged by the dispassionate Ulysses.

"Her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motive of her body.  
O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,  
That give a coasting welcome ere it comes,  
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts  
To every tickling reader! set them down  
For sluttish spoils of opportunity  
And daughters of the game."

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Now and again her speech awakens in the memory distant and perverted echoes of the loved speech of Juliet. But what in Juliet is simple modesty in Cressida is skilful acting. She expounds her own principle :—

“Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is ;”

and, in a burst of candour, laments that she weakly departed from it :—

“Prithee, tarry ;

You men will never tarry.

O foolish Cressid ! — 't might have still held off,  
And then you would have tarried.”

Like Juliet, she is troubled with foreboding apprehensions when she grants her love. But Juliet's divinations are tragic :—

“I have no joy of this contract to-night :

It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden ;

Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be

Ere one can say it lightens.”

Cressida's, equally true in forecast, are expressed in another key. “What too curious dreg espies my sweet lady,” says Troilus, “in the fountain of our love ?” And she makes answer : “More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.” When nothing but the dregs is left, she passes out of the play with a reflection on her own fickle and shallow desires :—

“O ! then conclude,

Minds, sway'd by eyes, are full of turpitude ;”

and Thersites is at hand as epilogue to translate her last speech into his own lewd dialect.

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The Greek and Trojan heroes are, most of them, fit enough gallants for Cressida. Achilles is a coward ; he shirks a fair encounter with Hector, and when Hector is unarmed he sets on his henchmen to murder him. Agamemnon is a leader only in name, destitute of authority and influence. Ajax is a "valiant ignorance," noisy and witless and vain. Patroclus is apple-squire to Achilles. Nor are the Greeks thus degraded merely in order that the Trojans, the reputed ancestors of Western Christendom, may be exalted in comparison. Following his authorities, Shakespeare makes the Trojans braver and more honourable than the Greeks. But the same poison works in both camps — "love, love, nothing but love," which is everywhere exhibited as a disordinate and disabling sensuality. The first words of *Troilus* strike the keynote : —

"Call here my varlet ; I'll unarm again :  
Why should I war without the walls of Troy,  
That find such cruel battle here within ?"

Paris is of a like mind. "I would fain have armed to-day," he says, when all the gallantry of Troy are afield, "but my sweet Nell would not have it so." Achilles keeps his tent for a similar reason. It was natural and innocent enough for the mediæval builders of the Trojan legend to give Achilles a lady-love in Polyxena, one of the daughters of King Priam. In the world of romance, without love there was no good fighting. But Shakespeare so transforms the old legend that the love of Achilles remains neither natural nor innocent. The hero

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spends his time in feasting and scurrility. He is easily dissuaded from battle : —

“ My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite  
From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.  
Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,  
A token from her daughter, my fair love,  
Both taxing me and gaging me to keep  
An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it :  
Fall, Greeks ; fall, fame ; honour, or go, or stay ;  
My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.  
Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent ;  
This night in banqueting must all be spent.”

As for the mortal Venus, the battle-gage of two continents, the divine Helen, she becomes in this play indistinguishable from an orange-wench of the Restoration. She is pert and vain ; she suspects her lord, Paris, of an attachment to Cressida, and breaks jests upon him until her unseemly innuendoes are reproved by Pandarus. But perhaps the best measure of Shakespeare's disaffection is to be found in the characters of Pandarus and Thersites. To these two, one in either camp, is entrusted the office of the Chorus. The business of criticism and counsel, so gently and excellently performed by the sweet-natured fools of many another play, has here fallen to the portion of a broker lackey and a cankered parasite. It is to be presumed that Pandarus and Thersites afforded occasions for the laughter which an Elizabethan audience was never content to forego. But there is no mirth in their desolate ribaldry. Who can feel at home in Shakespeare's world when his very jesters turn cruel and bitter ?

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They are the daylight of the other plays ; their presence keeps us in touch with humanity, so that when Mercutio dies, or when the Fool in "King Lear" "goes to bed at noon," the darkness falls with tropical swiftmess. But the jesting in this play of "Troilus and Cressida" is, from the first, the jesting of lost souls.

If the temper of the play raises difficulties, so does its structure, or lack of structure. Except "Henry VIII.," there is no play of Shakespeare's put together more loosely and carelessly — and "Henry VIII." is not wholly Shakespeare's, while "Troilus and Cressida," if a known voice be ever recognisable, is his from the first line to the last. Judged even by the standard of the romantic drama, which exacts only a unity of impression, the play is all confusion. The focus of interest is incessantly shifted, and the treachery of Cressida, if it be not the cause of the death of Hector, which might very well have happened without it, is the cause of nothing. The very semblance of tragedy is avoided, for Troilus is kept alive. The two motives of the play remain disparate, and their interaction is casually and indistinctly traced. If a single predominant moral must needs be found, it is the moral which has been expressed by the Lord Chancellor Bacon : "They do best who, if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter, and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life ; for if it check once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men that they can no ways be true to their own ends." It would be difficult to find another place where Shakespeare's philosophy of love comes down to

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Bacon's; and even this place of meeting, which is as good a rock as will ever be found for the site of the church of the Baconians, has, in their blind devotion to acrostics and abracadabras, been overlooked by that illiterate and superstitious sect.

These difficulties have troubled all critics of Shakespeare, and have given rise to many hypotheses and conjectures. The editors of the Folio of 1623 seem to have been puzzled by the play, for in their tripartite division of Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, they place it between the Histories and the Tragedies, leaving the reader to please himself. On the titlepage of the Quarto edition of 1609 it is called a History; in the preface it is alluded to as a Comedy. The suggestion has been made that the proprietors of the first Folio were unable to obtain the copyright of "Troilus and Cressida" until the printing of the volume was almost complete, and that they interposed it at the last moment, thereby breaking the scheme of pagination. But in any case, their difficulties are a forecast of the difficulties that have bewildered later generations, and the play remains unclassified.

A respectable company of critics have seen in it an attempt to depreciate ancient civilisation and the classical enthusiasms of the Renaissance. But unfortunately for their argument, the parts of the play on which they base it are found to have been borrowed, almost without exception, from the authorities who gave Shakespeare his story. Achilles is a coward already in the narrative of Guido delle Colonne, the Sicilian lawyer whose arid



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summary of the mediæval romance of Troy held undisputed sway over the popular imagination for four centuries. This scripture was divulged in England, for the benefit of the men of Shakespeare's time, in two principal versions. The earlier to appear in print, and by far the more influential of the two, was Caxton's "*Recueyell of the Historyes of Troye*" (1474), borrowed from Guido through the medium of the French version of Raoul le Fèvre. This book had a steady vogue; it survived the disuse of black-letter, and was reprinted again and again, with surprisingly few alterations, down to the age of Pope, when, under the title of "*The Destruction of Troy*," it still furnished entertainment to those who made no pretensions to polite taste. In the middle of the sixteenth century its supremacy was challenged by an edition of Lydgate's metrical version of Guido, — "*The Ancient Historie . . . of the Warres betwixte the Grecians and the Troyans . . . by John Lydgate*" (1555). It is amusing to find that Robert Braham, who introduces Lydgate to the reader, claims that his author is the only true and sincere historian of Troy, and attacks Caxton's fuller version of Guido as if it were an independent authority. The charges he brings against Caxton, though they are expressed with the venom of a partisan, yet would have some colour of truth if they were brought against Caxton's original. Caxton's story, says Braham, is "a longe tedious and brayneles bablyng, tending to no ende, nor havyng any certayne begynnyng: but proceadyng therin as an ydyot in his follye, that cannot make an ende tyll he be bydden."

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The huddled and disjointed monotony of Guido's work afflicted all his derivatives, and supplied Shakespeare with material that not even he could reduce to order or symmetry.

From these two versions Shakespeare derived the bulk of his material! In them he found the names of the six gates of Troy, mentioned in the Prologue to the play, the names of the warriors on either side, languidly rehearsed by Agamemnon in Act V., sc. v., "the dreadful Sagittary," the visit of Hector to the Grecian camp, the cowardly assassination of Troilus by Achilles (where Shakespeare substitutes Hector for Troilus), and, in short, most of the incidents that make up the story of the play. He borrowed Thersites from Chapman, whose first instalment of the *Iliad* appeared in 1598. The love-story of Troilus, which in Guido's "*Historia Trojana*" is a passing incident, slightly sketched, he got from Chaucer, who got it from Boccaccio, who got it from Benoît de Sainte-More, who built it up on hints furnished by the traditions and forgeries of the Dark Ages. Chaucer, Caxton, Lydgate, Chapman,—these were the progenitors of Shakespeare's "*Troilus and Cressida*," after the flesh. Whence came the spirit which animates it,—a spirit so utterly unlike anything to be found in the earlier treatments of the legend?

The occasion and circumstances of its production, if they were known to us, might give us help. The preface to the Quarto of 1609 speaks of it as "a new play, never staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar," or "sullied with the smoky breath

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of the multitude." But this may mean that it had not been acted on the public stage, and does not forbid us to suppose that it may have been produced at a private theatre or on some private or semi-private occasion. Under the date of 1602 "the booke of Troilus and Cressida" is entered in the Stationers' Register to Mr. Roberts, who printed editions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Hamlet"; and this earlier date will be found to agree better with such evidence as may be drawn from the style of the play. If this date be accepted, a tempting hypothesis is offered us by those who maintain that we have here Shakespeare's contribution to the War of the Stages, and that in his portraits of the Grecian heroes he satirised some of his contemporaries. But even this supposition, which does not admit of disproof, brings no clear light with it. Thersites may have been a recognisable caricature of Marston, but there is no general agreement on the identity of the other persons aimed at, and no consistent theory has been advanced concerning Shakespeare's share and motives in the fray. In any case, we must not, without overwhelming evidence, suppose that Shakespeare ever wrote a play which depended for its meaning and its merit chiefly on its ephemeral references and its satire on particular persons. The most interesting parts of "Troilus and Cressida"—the love-story and the political philosophy—are in no way elucidated by this ingenious theory.

Internal evidence, as it is called, is at a great disadvantage in these dramatic and critical causes; the con-

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viction that it produces is generally internal too, and cannot be imparted to other minds. Yet where that conviction is strong, it may be stated without offence. The long and infinitely laborious investigation that has been given, for more than a century now, to the chronology of Shakespeare's plays has at least established this conclusion, that plays produced about the same time frequently echo one another in device, in imagery, in metre, in turn of phrase; and that such echoes between plays lying far apart in time are both thin and rare. If "Troilus and Cressida" be read by one who listens for these echoes, it will be found that large parts of the drama display Shakespeare's earlier manner; and, in particular, that most of the scenes belonging to the love-story are haunted by reminiscences of the Comedies and "Romeo and Juliet." It is difficult to give instances without doing injustice to the argument, for the likeness is recognisable not so much in any startling coincidence as in a thousand turns of phrase and tricks of manner. The conceits of Shakespeare's earlier manner abound; for instance:—

"I have (as when the sun doth light a storm)  
Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile." (I. i.)

"Helen must needs be fair,  
When with your blood you daily paint her thus." (I. i.)

The use of rhyming couplets and the clink of word-play are frequent throughout these scenes; as here:—

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“That she was never yet that ever knew  
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue :” (I. ii.)

or here :—

“O virtuous fight,  
When right with right wars who shall be most right !” (III. ii.)

This repetition of a word is habitual in Shakespeare's earlier plays, even to the peril of sense, as where Biron, in “Love's Labour's Lost,” delivers himself thus :—

“Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile.”

Again, the figures of speech and the dramatic devices which are employed in these same scenes find their parallel nowhere but in the Comedies. When Troilus exclaims (I. i.) —

“Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,  
What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we ?  
Her bed is India ; there she lies, a pearl :  
Between our Ilium and where she resides,  
Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,  
Ourself the merchant ;” —

we are reminded of Belmont and the wooing of Portia. When Pandarus says (I. ii.), “I think his smiling becomes him better than any man in all Phrygia,” we think of Sir Andrew Ague-cheek. When he further remarks of Troilus, “He will weep you an 't were a man born in April,” we think of Bottom the Weaver.

The dramatic situations of the Comedies are here repeated. When Æneas comes as ambassador to the Grecian camp (I. iii.) the ironical conversation that he

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holds with Agamemnon is curiously reminiscent of the first interview between Viola and Olivia in "Twelfth Night." By as strange a juxtaposition the mocking speech of Ulysses in praise of Ajax (II. iii.)—

"Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet composure ;  
Praise him that got thee, she that gave thee suck :—

recalls Katharine's dutiful praise of old Vincentio in "The Taming of the Shrew." But the nearest affinity is with "Romeo and Juliet." Troilus, languishing for love of his lady (I. i.), speaks of "her hand, in whose comparison all whites are irk," just as Romeo speaks of "the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand." "O Cressida," he says again (IV. ii.),

"but that the busy day,  
Waked by the lark, hath roused the ribald crows,  
And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer,  
I would not from thee."

Cressida's casuistical wit concerning the giving and taking of kisses (IV. v.) recalls the first conversation of Romeo with Juliet. Pandarus, who is very unlike the genial elderly philosopher and man of the world described by Chaucer, is very like Juliet's Nurse. He has the same large volubility and irrelevance of speech. His phrases are sometimes almost identical with hers. "O admirable man!" he says, praising Troilus to Cressida. "Paris? Paris is dirt to him" (I. ii.). "O, he's a lovely gentleman," says the Nurse of another Paris, "Romeo's a dish-clout to him;" and she goes on, like Pandarus, to compare

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the subject of her discourse to an eagle. "A goodly medicine for mine aching bones!" says Pandarus (V. xi.) at the close of the play. "Is this the poultice for my aching bones?" says the Nurse. But these are trifles. No one, in whose ears the cadences of "Romeo and Juliet" are still ringing, can listen to the speech of Pandarus without innumerable reminiscences, now of the Nurse, now of Friar Laurence. On the whole, the character of Pandarus is less adequately conceived and less firmly drawn than that of the Nurse.

Nevertheless, it cannot be allowed for an instant that the play, as a whole, is one of Shakespeare's early plays. There are in it echoes also of the great tragedies. One passage — Thersites' description of Ajax (III. iii.), "He is grown a very land fish, languageless, a monster" — has often been pointed to as the germ of the conception of Caliban. Thersites' abuse of Patroclus (V. i.) — "Thou idle immaterial skein of sleeve-silk, thou green sarcenet flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's purse, thou! Ah, how the poor world is pestered with such water-flies;" — recalls Kent's rich vein of invective in "King Lear" and Hamlet's contempt for young Osric. There are other reminders of "Hamlet," — as where Troilus, asked by Pandarus what he is reading, replies (V. iii.), "Words, words, mere words"; or where, after witnessing the perfidy of Cressida, he stands transfixed to the spot, and argues with Ulysses after the very manner of the Danish prince (V. ii.). "What hath she done, prince, that can soil our mothers?" asks Ulysses, who has not followed the quick train of thought in Troilus; and he is

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answered with all the abrupt irony of Hamlet, "Nothing at all, unless that this were she." There are many near resemblances to "King Lear," some to "Macbeth," and, most telling of all, there is evidence in the play of Shakespeare's reading of Plutarch. In some of the scenes in the Grecian camp there is the condensed, highly figured rhetoric and the packed wealth of thought that distinguish Shakespeare's later manner. So that in this play work that bears all the marks of youth alternates with work that is indisputably mature.

The loose structure of the play makes it easy to believe that it does in fact combine the work of two periods, and that when he wrote it Shakespeare used up parts of an earlier play of his own, which he had discontinued and laid aside. We pass here into the region of speculation; and with good excuse. There is no explanation of "Troilus and Cressida" that holds the field; no satisfactory account of its place in the file of Shakespeare's works. In the absence of any plausible demonstration of what was, it is legitimate to set forth what may have been. If Shakespeare, during the early years of his dramatic activity, was seeking for a love-story whereon to found a play, the best-known and most obvious of love-stories was the story of "Troilus and Cressida." During the whole of the sixteenth century it enjoyed a popularity which threatened sometimes to cast even the "Canterbury Tales" into the shade. In the reign of Henry VIII. it was the favourite reading of the younger sort of courtier. Sir Thomas Elyot's dialogue called "Pasquil the Playne" (1533) introduces Gnatho, the flatterer, who



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carries in his hand a copy of the New Testament, but has "Troilus and Cressida" concealed in his bosom. Allusions to the two lovers are everywhere to be found in the verses of those "rhyming mother-wits" who preceded Spenser and Marlowe. The names of Troilus and Cressida, like that of their go-between, were in a fair way to become common nouns. George Turberville, in a poem addressed to his lady visiting London, examples this. He invokes the town : —

"Yeeelde me a good accompt  
Of hir that is my joie,  
And send hir to hir Troylus  
That longs for hir in Troie."

If we had no specific evidence we still could not doubt that Shakespeare very early read the story. But indeed he alludes to it more than once. "I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir," says the Clown in "Twelfth Night" as he eyes the coin that Viola has just given him, "to bring a Troilus to this Cressida." The passage in "The Merchant of Venice" is a more direct reminiscence of Chaucer : —

"In such a night  
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls  
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night."

There is nothing extravagant in the supposition that before he took up with Arthur Brooke's story of Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare had tried his prentice hand on this more popular theme ; and it is easy to find half a

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dozen reasons why he should have abandoned it in favour of a whole-hearted romance. The story lends itself too easily to the purposes of the cynic. It compels even Chaucer, whose heart is with the lovers, and who struggles throughout with the intractable moral imposed on him by his material, to blaspheme his own sympathies in the concluding verses of his tale.

But in 1602 and later Shakespeare's attitude had changed. It is needless to raise the well-worn question concerning the influences and causes that found the author of "Twelfth Night" and made him into the author of "Hamlet." There is a present-day tendency — anti-sentimental, and so far laudable — to regard Shakespeare as a tradesman of genius, and to account for the differences between one play and another by the fluctuating fashions of the theatrical market that he supplied. But this view, besides compelling us to assume that for some eight or ten years the public would take nothing from Shakespeare but heart-rending woes, makes nonsense of poetry, which gains followers in every age only by tempting them with opportunities for self-expression. Whether the events which darkened the world for Shakespeare were events that a law-court could take cognisance of, or a registrar could record, we do not know. We do know that the world was darkened for him. This is no question of the difference between tragedy and comedy; a comedy may be bitter, and a tragedy sweet. "Romeo and Juliet" is a tragedy; "Measure for Measure," a comedy. And "Romeo and Juliet" is full of Shakespeare's irony. How stupid a series of blunders it

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is that brings the lovers to their tomb! How shadowy and trivial the feuds of the Montagues and Capulets appear against the luminous heaven of this great passion! But in "Troilus and Cressida" the moral is reversed. It is politics that matter now; and politics are a disappointment. In place of the heavy stage fathers and worldly mothers whose insensibility to the true issue thwarts the smooth course of things, we have the lovers themselves, blinded by their passion, and the "heroes," blinded by their vanity.

In the speeches of Ulysses, Shakespeare's political creed finds utterance. If the famous speech in defence of "degree, priority, and place" (I. iii.) be not an expression of that creed, it is impossible to know where to look for any trace of it. In this respect Shakespeare was a man of his time, of the sixteenth century, and of Tudor, England. His political sympathies, like those of Chaucer before him and Johnson after him, were aristocratic. He believed, with Chaucer's Parson, that "the commune profit might nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but if God hadde ordayned that somme men hadde hyer degree and som men lower." No other doctrine, it might almost be said, was tenable in the reign of Elizabeth. After centuries of degradation and distraction from internal feuds, England had at last attained to peace and renown under a strong monarchy. The English historical plays are a striking evidence, if evidence were needed, of the deep impress left on the popular imagination by the miseries of the Wars of the Roses. Towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth, a recurrence of these

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miseries from a disputed succession seemed likely. The fervent speech of the Bishop of Carlisle in "Richard II." (IV. i.) —

"O, if you rear this house against this house,  
It will the woofullest division prove  
That ever fell upon this cursed earth ; —"

when it was spoken on the boards of the Elizabethan stage, was something more than an academic declamation. It was applauded by men who saw in it an allusion to the future as well as to the past. There was no foothold in England for the practical doctrines of democracy, which were held, in actual life as in Shakespeare's plays, chiefly by pedants and rebels. Some scholars dreamed in their studies of a restoration of ancient republican forms. But Shakespeare, not being scholar enough to seek guidance from the ancients, habitually reads Roman history by the light of English politics. And the reflections of Ulysses on the nature of political reputation and the fickleness of popular applause have all the sincerity of experience. Who should know the weaknesses of the people if not a theatrical manager? Moreover, Shakespeare, by his association with Southampton, and perhaps with Essex, had been brought very close to the political troubles of Elizabeth's last years.

The note of sincerity and passion which marks the utterance of Ulysses is heard again in the anguish of Troilus. If the purpose of the play be indeed ironical and satirical, here it breaks down. The dramatist was

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too full of the milk of human kindness to pass cold sentences of damnation on all his creatures. The defeated love of Troilus touched him too near. It is the weakness and the strength of Shakespeare as a dramatist that his plots are often sacrificed to his characters. His puppets come alive, and assume control. If, in his haste, he chose an ironical conception as the framework of his play, he could not, like the bloodless wits and fierce misanthropes, carry it out consistently and relentlessly to the end. The love of Troilus, anywhere but in this play, would be matter for tragedy. He is as true a lover as any of Shakespeare's making, and when the gibes of Thersites have faded from the memory, there still rings in the ears of the reader the pathos of that farewell, that plea of Love against the felon Time, who

“Scants us with a single famished kiss,  
Distasted with the salt of broken tears.”

WALTER RALEIGH.

# TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

PRIAM, king of Troy.

HECTOR,  
TROILUS,  
PARIS,  
DEIPHOBUS,  
HELENUS, } his sons.

MARGARELON, a bastard son of Priam.

ÆNEAS,  
ANTENOR, } Trojan commanders.

CALCHAS, a Trojan priest, taking part with the Greeks.

PANDARUS, uncle to Cressida.

AGAMEMNON, the Grecian general.

MENELAUS, his brother.

ACHILLES,  
AJAX,  
ULYSSES,  
NESTOR,  
DIOMEDES,  
PATROCLUS, } Grecian commanders.

THERSITES, a deformed and scurrilous Grecian.

ALEXANDER, servant to Cressida.

Servant to Troilus.

Servant to Paris.

Servant to Diomedes.

HELEN, wife to Menelaus.

ANDROMACHE, wife to Hector.

CASSANDRA, daughter to Priam; a prophetess.

CRESSIDA, daughter to Calchas.

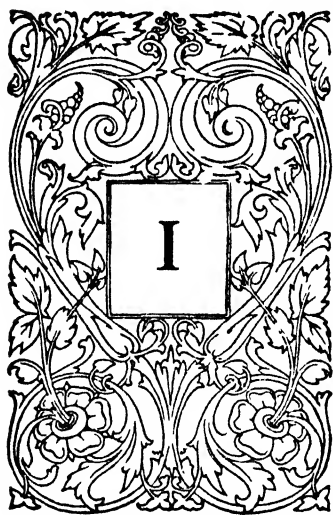
Trojan and Greek Soldiers, and Attendants.

SCENE: *Troy, and the Grecian camp*

<sup>1</sup> Two quartos of this piece appeared in 1609, one with a fantastic preface by the publisher, but otherwise with identical texts. The Folio of 1623 varies greatly from the Quartos, mostly for the worse. The Quartos have no division into Acts or Scenes. The Folio has only the preliminary heading "Actus Primus. Scœna Prima." Rowe first divided the play into acts and scenes, and gave a list of the *Dramatis Personæ* with an indication of the "Scene."



## THE PROLOGUE



IN TROY THERE LIES THE  
 scene. From isles of Greece  
 The princes orgulous, their high  
 blood chafed,  
 Have to the port of Athens sent  
 their ships,  
 Fraught with the ministers and  
 instruments  
 Of cruel war: sixty and nine,  
 that wore  
 Their crownets regal, from the  
 Athenian bay  
 Put forth toward Phrygia, and  
 their vow is made  
 To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures  
 The ravish'd Helen, Menelaus' queen,

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THE PROLOGUE *In Troy . . . of war*] The Prologue only appears in the Folio. It is omitted from the Quartos. It is probably by another hand than Shakespeare's.

2 *orgulous*] proud, haughty; an archaic usage from the French "*orgueilleux*."



# TROILUS AND CRESSIDA PROLOGUE

With wanton Paris sleeps; and that's the quarrel. 10  
 To Tenedos they come;  
 And the deep-drawing barks do there disgorge  
 Their warlike fraughtage: now on Dardan plains  
 The fresh and yet unbruised Greeks do pitch  
 Their brave pavilions: Priam's six-gated city,  
 Dardan, and Timbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,  
 And Antenorides, with massy staples,  
 And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts,  
 Sperr up the sons of Troy.  
 Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits, 20  
 On one and other side, Trojan and Greek,  
 Sets all on hazard: and hither am I come  
 A prologue arm'd, but not in confidence

- 6 *crownets*] coronets. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, i, 4: "crowner" (for "coroner").  
 8 *immures*] fortified walls; rare as a noun, although common as a verb.  
 13 *fraughtage*] freightage, cargo.  
 15-17 *Priam's six-gated city . . . Antenorides*] These names of Troy's gates correspond with the medieval tradition, as recorded in Lydgate's *Troy book* and Caxton's *Recuyell of Troy*.  
 18 *corresponsive and fulfilling*] close fitting and well fastening.  
 19 *Sperr up*] Bar in; Theobald's correction of the original reading *Stirre up*. To sperr, i. e., bar, the gate was a common Elizabethan expression.  
 22 *Sets all on hazard*] Exposes everything to risks of battle.  
 23-25 *A prologue arm'd . . . argument*] Apparently a hit at the "armed prologue" which introduced Jonson's polemical *Poetaster*, 1602. Jonson's "prologue" explained that he bore arms to protect himself against "base detractors and illiterate apes," i. e., the fellow dramatists and actors with whom he was at fierce feud at the time. Here the "prologue," by way of peaceful contrast, justifies his being armed from no vainglory on the part of author or actor, but because he has to introduce warlike topics.

## PROLOGUE TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited  
In like conditions as our argument,  
To tell you, fair beholders, that our play  
Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of those broils,  
Beginning in the middle; starting thence away  
To what may be digested in a play.  
Like, or find fault; do as your pleasures are:  
Now good or bad, 't is but the chance of war.

80

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27 *vaunt*] van, vanguard.



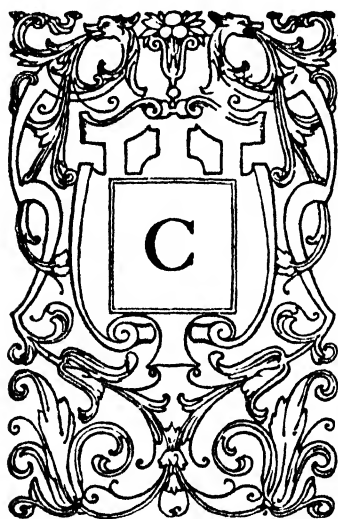


## ACT FIRST — SCENE I — TROY

*BEFORE PRIAM'S PALACE*

*Enter PANDARUS and TROILUS*

TROILUS



WAIL HERE MY VARLET;

I'll unarm again:

Why should I war without the  
walls of Troy,

That find such cruel battle here  
within?

Each Trojan that is master of  
his heart,

Let him to field; Troilus, alas,  
hath none!

PAN. Will this gear ne'er be  
mended?

TRO. The Greeks are strong  
and skilful to their strength,

Fierce to their skill and to their fierceness valiant,  
But I am weaker than a woman's tear,

1 *varlet*] orderly, servant, valet.

5 *Troilus*] This name is pronounced throughout the play as a dis-  
syllable.

Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance, 10  
 Less valiant than the virgin in the night,  
 And skillless as unpractised infancy.

PAN. Well, I have told you enough of this: for my  
 part, I'll not meddle nor make no farther. He that  
 will have a cake out of the wheat must needs tarry the  
 grinding.

TRO. Have I not tarried?

PAN. Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry the  
 bolting.

TRO. Have I not tarried?

PAN. Ay, the bolting; but you must tarry the  
 leavening. 21

TRO. Still have I tarried.

PAN. Ay, to the leavening; but here's yet in the word  
 "hereafter," the kneading, the making of the cake, the  
 heating of the oven, and the baking; nay, you must stay  
 the cooling too, or you may chance to burn your lips.

TRO. Patience herself, what goddess e'er she be,  
 Doth lesser blench at sufferance than I do.  
 At Priam's royal table do I sit;  
 And when fair Cressid comes into my thoughts, — 30  
 So, traitor! — "When she comes!" — When is she thence?

6 *gear*] business.

7 *to their strength*] in addition to. So "*to their skill*" and "*to their fierce-*  
*ness*" in line 8.

10 *fonder*] more foolish.

14 *not meddle nor make*] proverbial for "keeping clear of" a thing.

20 *the bolting*] the sifting.

28 *blench at sufferance*] flinch from suffering (pain).

31 *So, traitor!* — "*When she comes!*" Thus Rowe. The old editions  
 read *then she comes* for *When she comes*, and punctuate confusedly.

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

PAN. Well, she looked yesternight fairer than ever I saw her look, or any woman else.

TRO. I was about to tell thee: — when my heart,  
As wedged with a sigh, would rive in twain,  
Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,  
I have, as when the sun doth light a storm,  
Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile:  
But sorrow, that is couch'd in seeming gladness,  
Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness. 40

PAN. An her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's — well, go to — there were no more comparison between the women: but, for my part, she is my kinswoman; I would not, as they term it, praise her: but I would somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as I did. I will not dispraise your sister Cassandra's wit, but —

TRO. O Pandarus! I tell thee, Pandarus, —  
When I do tell thee, there my hopes lie drown'd,  
Reply not in how many fathoms deep  
They lie indrench'd. I tell thee, I am mad 50  
In Cressid's love: thou answer'st “she is fair;”  
Pour'st in the open ulcer of my heart  
Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice,  
Handlest in thy discourse, O, that her hand,  
In whose comparison all whites are ink  
Writing their own reproach, to whose soft seizure  
The cygnet's down is harsh, and spirit of sense

37 *a storm*] Rowe's correction of the unintelligible *a scorne* and *a-scorne* of the old copies.

54 *O, that her hand*] Oh, that hand of hers.

56 *to whose soft seizure*] compared with whose soft clasp or touch.

57–58 *spirit of sense . . . ploughman*] the power of sensibility (in other

Hard as the palm of ploughman: this thou tell'st me,  
As true thou tell'st me, when I say I love her;  
But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,      60  
Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me  
The knife that made it.

PAN. I speak no more than truth.

TRO. Thou dost not speak so much.

PAN. Faith, I'll not meddle in 't. Let her be as she  
is: if she be fair, 't is the better for her; an she be not,  
she has the mends in her own hands.

TRO. Good Pandarus, how now, Pandarus!

PAN. I have had my labour for my travail; ill-thought  
on of her, and ill-thought on of you: gone between and  
between, but small thanks for my labour.      71

TRO. What, art thou angry, Pandarus? what, with  
me?

PAN. Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so  
fair as Helen: an she were not kin to me, she would be  
as fair on Friday as Helen is on Sunday. But what care  
I? I care not an she were a black-a-moor; 't is all one  
to me.

people's hand), compared with Cressida's, is hard as the palm of a  
ploughman. "Spirit of sense" is repeated III, iii, 106, *infra*: "that  
most pure *spirit of sense* (*sc.* of the eye)."

67 *she has the mends in her own hands*] a proverbial phrase. The remedy  
lies at her own disposal. She may improve her complexion by using  
cosmetics.

70-71 *gone between and between*] played the go-between over and over  
again. Cf. III, ii, 197, *infra*: "goer between."

75 *as fair . . . on Sunday*] as fair on the fast day (when shabby clothes  
are worn), as Helen is on a Sunday (when people dress their best).

# SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

TRO. Say I she is not fair?

PAN. I do not care whether you do or no. She's a fool to stay behind her father; let her to the Greeks; and so I'll tell her the next time I see her: for my part, I'll meddle nor make no more i' the matter. 82

TRO. Pandarus, —

PAN. Not I.

TRO. Sweet Pandarus, —

PAN. Pray you, speak no more to me: I will leave all as I found it, and there an end. [*Exit. An alarum.*]

TRO. Peace, you ungracious clamours! peace, rude sounds!

Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,  
When with your blood you daily paint her thus. 90

I cannot fight upon this argument;

It is too starved a subject for my sword.

But Pandarus — O gods, how do you plague me!

I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar;

And he's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo

As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.

Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,

What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we.

Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl:

Between our Ilium and where she resides, 100

80 *her father*] Calchas, the Trojan priest, who, being sent by Priam to consult the oracle at Delphi, joined the Greeks at the divine command.

95 *tetchy to be woo'd*] ill-tempered, peevish, on being wooed.

97 *Apollo . . . Daphne's love*] The story of Apollo's courtship of Daphne is told in Ovid's *Metam.*, I, 452 *seq.* Cf. *T. of Shrew*, *Induction*, II, 55-58.

100 *Ilium*] It is clear that wherever Shakespeare employs the form



Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,  
 Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar  
 Our doubtful hope, our convoy and our bark.

*Alarum. Enter ÆNEAS*

ÆNE. How now, Prince Troilus! wherefore not  
 afield?

TRO. Because not there: this woman's answer sorts,  
 For womanish it is to be from thence.

What news, Æneas, from the field to-day?

ÆNE. That Paris is returned home, and hurt.

TRO. By whom, Æneas?

ÆNE. Troilus, by Menelaus.

TRO. Let Paris bleed: 't is but a scar to scorn; 110  
 Paris is gored with Menelaus' horn. [Alarum.]

ÆNE. Hark, what good sport is out of town to-day!

TRO. Better at home, if "would I might" were  
 "may."

But to the sport abroad: are you bound thither?

ÆNE. In all swift haste.

TRO. Come, go we then together.  
[Exeunt.]

"Ilium" he designates Priam's royal palace (cf. I, ii, 43, *infra*) in agreement with his medieval authorities. Elsewhere, II, ii, 109, and V, viii, 11, *infra*, Shakespeare uses the form "Ilion," by which he seems to mean, though the point is uncertain, Troy itself, in accordance with classical usage.

105 *sorts*] fits, harmonises.

110 *a scar to scorn*] a scar to be scorned.

111 *Menelaus' horn*] a reference to the belief that horns sprouted from the foreheads of husbands whose wives were unfaithful.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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### SCENE II — THE SAME

#### A STREET

*Enter CRESSIDA and ALEXANDER her man*

CRES. Who were those went by?

ALEX. Queen Hecuba and Helen.

CRES. And whither go they?

ALEX. Up to the eastern tower,  
Whose height commands as subject all the vale,  
To see the battle. Hector, whose patience  
Is as a virtue fix'd, to-day was moved:  
He chid Andromache and struck his armourer;  
And, like as there were husbandry in war,  
Before the sun rose he was harness'd light,  
And to the field goes he; where every flower  
Did, as a prophet, weep what it foresaw  
In Hector's wrath. 10

CRES. What was his cause of anger?

ALEX. The noise goes, this: there is among the  
Greeks

A lord of Trojan blood, nephew to Hector;  
They call him Ajax.

---

5 *fix'd*] constant or inherent, not variable nor accidental.

7 *like as . . . husbandry in war*] as if there were need of economy (of time and energy) in warfare.

8 *light*] nimbly, quickly. No reference is intended to the weight of the armour.

13-14 *A lord of Trojan blood . . . Ajax*] Ajax's mother, Priam's sister,

CRES. Good; and what of him?

ALEX. They say he is a very man per se, 15  
And stands alone.

CRES. So do all men, unless they are drunk, sick, or have no legs.

ALEX. This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant: a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attainment but he carries some stain of it: he is melancholy without cause and merry against the hair: he hath the joints of every thing; but every thing so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight.

---

was a Trojan, and was Hector's first cousin. Cf. II, i, 12, II, ii, 77, and IV, v, 120 *seq.*, *infra*. "Nephew" may be used for "kinsman" like the Latin "nepos."

15 *a very man per se*] a man unique, peerless, sui generis. The phrase is often written "A per se" (*i. e.*, the letter A by itself), which is sometimes corrupted into "apersey."

20 *particular additions*] particular qualities, titles to merit, or attributes.

22-23 *his valour . . . folly*] his valour is so mixed up with folly that the two are indistinguishable from one another in the mass.

26-27 *against the hair*] against the grain, unseasonably, like the French "à contrepoil."

27 *the joints of every thing*] the limbs of every kind of being.

28 *Briareus*] the hundred-handed monster of classical mythology. He is mentioned by Shakespeare nowhere else. Cf. "centumgeminus Briareus": Virgil, *Æneid*, VI, 287.

29 *Argus*] the hundred-eyed monster of classical mythology. Cf. Ovid's *Metam.*, I, 625. "Centum luminibus cinctum caput Argus habebat."

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

CRES. But how should this man, that makes me smile, make Hector angry? 31

ALEX. They say he yesterday coped Hector in the battle and struck him down, the disdain and shame whereof hath ever since kept Hector fasting and waking.

*Enter PANDARUS*

CRES. Who comes here?

ALEX. Madam, your uncle Pandarus.

CRES. Hector's a gallant man.

ALEX. As may be in the world, lady.

PAN. What's that? what's that?

CRES. Good morrow, uncle Pandarus. 40

PAN. Good morrow, cousin Cressid: what do you talk of? Good morrow, Alexander. How do you, cousin? When were you at Ilium?

CRES. This morning, uncle.

PAN. What were you talking of when I came? Was Hector armed and gone ere you came to Ilium? Helen was not up, was she?

CRES. Hector was gone; but Helen was not up.

PAN. E'en so: Hector was stirring early.

CRES. That were we talking of, and of his anger. 50

PAN. Was he angry?

CRES. So he says here.

PAN. True, he was so; I know the cause too; he'll lay about him to-day, I can tell them that: and there's Troilus will not come far behind him; let them take heed of Troilus, I can tell them that too.

32 *coped*] met, encountered.

43 *Ilium*] See note on I, i, 100, *supra*.

CRES. What, is he angry too?

PAN. Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

CRES. O Jupiter! there's no comparison. 60

PAN. What, not between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man if you see him?

CRES. Ay, if I ever saw him before and knew him.

PAN. Well, I say Troilus is Troilus.

CRES. Then you say as I say; for, I am sure, he is not Hector.

PAN. No, nor Hector is not Troilus in some degrees.

CRES. 'T is just to each of them; he is himself.

PAN. Himself! Alas, poor Troilus! I would he were.

CRES. So he is. 70

PAN. Condition, I had gone barefoot to India.

CRES. He is not Hector.

PAN. Himself! no, he's not himself: would a' were himself! Well, the gods are above; time must friend or end: well, Troilus, well, I would my heart were in her body! No, Hector is not a better man than Troilus.

CRES. Excuse me.

PAN. He is elder.

CRES. Pardon me, pardon me.

PAN. Th' other 's not come to 't; you shall tell me

---

71 *Condition . . . India*] On the condition that he were himself, I would have walked barefoot to India — an impossible feat. Pandarus means that by no possibility could he admit that Troilus was in a normal state.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

another tale, when th' other 's come to 't. Hector shall not have his wit this year. 82

CRES. He shall not need it, if he have his own.

PAN. Nor his qualities.

CRES. No matter.

PAN. Nor his beauty.

CRES. 'T would not become him; his own 's better.

PAN. You have no judgement, niece: Helen herself swore th' other day, that Troilus, for a brown favour — for so 't is, I must confess, — not brown neither, — 90

CRES. No, but brown.

PAN. Faith, to say truth, brown and not brown.

CRES. To say the truth, true and not true.

PAN. She praised his complexion above Paris.

CRES. Why, Paris hath colour enough.

PAN. So he has.

CRES. Then Troilus should have too much: if she praised him above, his complexion is higher than his; he having colour enough, and the other higher, is too flaming a praise for a good complexion. I had as lief Helen's golden tongue had commended Troilus for a copper nose. 101

PAN. I swear to you, I think Helen loves him better than Paris.

CRES. Then she's a merry Greek indeed.

82 *his wit*] Troilus' sense; Rowe's correction of the old reading *will*.

89 *a brown favour*] a brown complexion.

98-99 *higher . . . higher*] more highly coloured.

101 *a copper nose*] a red nose, from drink or disease.

104 *a merry Greek*] a common phrase for a lively person, usually "a jolly fellow." Cf. IV, iv, 55, *infra*.

PAN. Nay, I am sure she does. She came to him th' other day into the compassed window, — and, you know, he has not past three or four hairs on his chin, —

CRES. Indeed, a tapster's arithmetic may soon bring his particulars therein to a total. 109

PAN. Why, he is very young: and yet will he, within three pound, lift as much as his brother Hector.

CRES. Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?

PAN. But, to prove to you that Helen loves him: she came and puts me her white hand to his cloven chin, —

CRES. Juno have mercy! how came it cloven?

PAN. Why, you know, 't is dimpled: I think his smiling becomes him better than any man in all Phrygia.

CRES. O, he smiles valiantly.

PAN. Does he not?

CRES. O yes, an 't were a cloud in autumn. 120

PAN. Why, go to, then: but to prove to you that Helen loves Troilus, —

CRES. Troilus will stand to the proof, if you'll prove it so.

PAN. Troilus! why, he esteems her no more than I esteem an addle egg.

CRES. If you love an addle egg as well as you love an idle head, you would eat chickens i' the shell.

PAN. I cannot choose but laugh, to think how she tickled his chin; indeed, she has a marvellous white hand, I must needs confess, — 131

106 *compassed window*] round or bow-window. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, IV, iii, 136: "*compassed cape*."

112 *lifter*] thief; "lift" in this sense survives in "*shop-lifting*."

120 *a cloud in autumn*] a signal of rain.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

CRES. Without the rack.

PAN. And she takes upon her to spy a white hair on his chin.

CRES. Alas, poor chir ! many a wart is richer.

PAN. But there was such laughing ! Queen Hecuba laughed that her eyes ran o'er.

CRES. With mill-stones.

PAN. And Cassandra laughed.

CRES. But there was more temperate fire under the pot of her eyes : did her eyes run o'er too ? 141

PAN. And Hector laughed.

CRES. At what was all this laughing ?

PAN. Marry, at the white hair that Helen spied on Troilus' chir.

CRES. An 't had been a green hair, I should have laughed too.

PAN. They laughed not so much at the hair as at his pretty answer.

CRES. What was his answer ? 150

PAN. Quoth she, "Here 's but two and fifty hairs on your chin, and one of them is white."

CRES. This is her question.

PAN. That's true ; make no question of that. "Two and fifty hairs," quoth he, "and one white : that white hair is my father, and all the rest are his sons." "Jupiter !" quoth she, "which of these hairs is Paris my

---

137-138 *her eyes ran o'er With mill-stones*] a common expression for hard-heartedness. Cf. *Rich. III*, I, iii, 354: "Your eyes drop *mill-stones*" and note.

151, 154 *two and fifty*] Thus the early editions, which Theobald changed to *one and fifty*, fifty being the traditional number of Priam's sons.



husband?" "The forked one," quoth he, "pluck't out, and give it him." But there was such laughing! and Helen so blushed, and Paris so chafed, and all the rest so laughed, that it passed. 161

CRES. So let it now; for it has been a great while going by.

PAN. Well, cousin, I told you a thing yesterday; think on't.

CRES. So I do.

PAN. I'll be sworn 't is true; he will weep you, an 't were a man born in April.

CRES. And I'll spring up in his tears, an 't were a nettle against May. [A retreat sounded. 170]

PAN. Hark! they are coming from the field: shall we stand up here, and see them as they pass toward Ilium? good niece, do, sweet niece Cressida.

CRES. At your pleasure.

PAN. Here, here, here's an excellent place; here we may see most bravely: I'll tell you them all by their names as they pass by; but mark Troilus above the rest.

*ÆNEAS passes*

CRES. Speak not so loud.

PAN. That's Æneas: is not that a brave man? he's

158 *The forked one*] An allusion to the forked horns associated with the deceived husband's brow.

161 *it passed*] it surpassed everything, went to immoderate limits.

Cressida in the next line puns on the word in its ordinary sense.

167-168 *an 't were a man*] as if he were a man.

170 *against May*] at the approach of May.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

one of the flowers of Troy, I can tell you: but mark Troilus; you shall see anon. 181

CRES. Who's that?

ANTENOR *passes*

PAN. That's Antenor: he has a shrewd wit, I can tell you; and he's a man good enough: he's one o' the soundest judgements in Troy, whosoever, and a proper man of person. When comes Troilus? I'll show you Troilus anon: if he see me, you shall see him nod at me.

CRES. Will he give you the nod?

PAN. You shall see.

CRES. If he do, the rich shall have more. 190

HECTOR *passes*

PAN. That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there's a fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There's a brave man, niece. O brave Hector! Look how he looks! there's a countenance! is't not a brave man?

CRES. O, a brave man!

PAN. Is a' not? it does a man's heart good. Look you what hacks are on his helmet! look you yonder, do you see? look you there: there's no jesting; there's

183 *he has a shrewd wit*] Lydgate in his Troy-book seems to be the only authority which gives Antenor the distinctive character of a wit.

185-186 *a proper man of person*] a man of comely person.

188-190 *Will he give you the nod? . . . have more*] The word "nod" suggests to Cressida the slang word "noddy," *i. e.*, simpleton, and means that if Troilus give Pandarus a nod (*i. e.*, a fool's token), Pandarus will receive a new supply of stupidity, in which he was rich before. Steevens doubtfully suggests that "give the nod" was a technical term in a game of cards called "noddy."

laying on, take't off who will, as they say: there be  
hacks! 200

CRES. Be those with swords?

PAN. Swords! any thing, he cares not; an the devil  
come to him, it's all one: by God's lid, it does one's  
heart good. Yonder comes Paris, yonder comes Paris.

PARIS *passes*

Look ye yonder, niece; is't not a gallant man too, is't  
not? Why, this is brave now. Who said he came hurt  
home to-day? he's not hurt: why, this will do Helen's  
heart good now, ha! Would I could see Troilus now!  
you shall see Troilus anon.

CRES. Who's that? 210

HELENUS *passes*

PAN. That's Helenus: I marvel where Troilus is.  
That's Helenus. I think he went not forth to-day.  
That's Helenus.

CRES. Can Helenus fight, uncle?

PAN. Helenus! no; yes, he'll fight indifferent well.  
I marvel where Troilus is. Hark! do you not hear the  
people cry "Troilus"? Helenus is a priest.

CRES. What sneaking fellow comes yonder?

TROILUS *passes*

PAN. Where? yonder? that's Deiphobus. 'T is  
Troilus! there's a man, niece! Hem! Brave Troilus!  
the prince of chivalry! 221

---

203 *by God's lid*] by God's eyelid; a proverbial oath.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

CRES. Peace, for shame, peace!

PAN. Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece; look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hacked than Hector's; and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he never saw three-and-twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way! Had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter a goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris? Paris is dirt to him; and, I warrant, Helen, to change, would give an eye to boot.

231

*Common Soldiers pass*

CRES. Here come more.

PAN. Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran, chaff and bran! porridge after meat! I could live and die i' the eyes of Troilus. Ne'er look, ne'er look; the eagles are gone: crows and daws, crows and daws! I had rather be such a man as Troilus than Agamemnon and all Greece.

CRES. There is among the Greeks Achilles, a better man than Troilus.

240

PAN. Achilles! a drayman, a porter, a very camel.

CRES. Well, well.

PAN. Well, well! Why, have you any discretion? have you any eyes? do you know what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality, and such like, the spice and salt that season a man?

---

231 *an eye*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *money*.

CRES. Ay, a minced man: and then to be baked with no date in the pie, for then the man's date is out.

PAN. You are such a woman! one knows not at what ward you lie. 251

CRES. Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to defend my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine honesty; my mask, to defend my beauty; and you, to defend all these: and at all these wards I lie, at a thousand watches.

PAN. Say one of your watches.

CRES. Nay, I'll watch you for that; and that's one of the chiefest of them too: if I cannot ward what I would not have hit, I can watch you for telling how I took the blow; unless it swell past hiding, and then it's past watching. 262

PAN. You are such another!

*Enter Troilus's Boy*

BOY. Sir, my lord would instantly speak with you.

PAN. Where?

BOY. At your own house; there he unarms him.

PAN. Good boy, tell him I come. [*Exit Boy*] I doubt he be hurt. Fare ye well, good niece.

248 *minced*] affected, with a pun on the word in the phrase "mince-pie."

249 *no date . . . date is out*] Dates were common ingredients of Elizabethan pastry; "the man's date is out" means "the man's term of life is done." For the pun cf. *All's Well*, I, i, 147 and note.

250-251 *at what ward you lie*] what posture of defence you assume; a technical phrase in fencing.

254 *honesty*] chastity.

260 *for telling*] lest you tell.

## SCENE II    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

CRES. Adieu, uncle.

PAN. I will be with you, niece, by and by.

270

CRES. To bring, uncle?

PAN. Ay, a token from Troilus.

CRES. By the same token, you are a bawd.

[Exit Pandarus.]

Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice,  
He offers in another's enterprise:

But more in Troilus thousand fold I see

Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be,

Yet hold I off. WOLLEN are angels, wooing:

Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing:

That she beloved knows nought that knows not this: 280

Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is:

That she was never yet that ever knew

Love got so sweet as when desire did sue:

Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:

Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech.

Then though my heart's content firm love doth bear,

Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear. [Exeunt.]

270-272 *I will be . . . from Troilus*] This bantering slang is not very clear. But "to be with one to bring" was often used in the sense "to be even with one" or "to give as good as one gets," "to retaliate handsomely." Cressida tauntingly asks Pandarus if he thinks to get quits with her in their war of wits and Pandarus meets her challenge with a fresh quip.

279 *joy's soul . . . doing*] The essence of joy is in the act of enjoyment.

285 *Achievement . . . beseech*] When men have won us they become our commanders; before we are won, they are our suppliants.

286 *my heart's content . . . bear*] my heart's happiness rests on assured love.

## SCENE III—THE GRECIAN CAMP

## BEFORE AGAMEMNON'S TENT

*Sennet. Enter AGAMEMNON, NESTOR, ULYSSES, MENELAUS,  
with others*

AGAM. Princes,

What grief hath set the jaundice on your cheeks?  
The ample proposition that hope makes  
In all designs begun on earth below  
Fails in the promised largeness: checks and disasters  
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,  
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,  
Infect the sound pine and divert his grain  
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.  
Nor, princes, is it matter new to us  
That we come short of our suppose so far  
That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand;  
Sith every action that hath gone before,  
Whereof we have record, trial did draw  
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim

10

3 *The ample proposition*] The ample promise; "the promised largeness" (line 5) means much the same thing, although there is an inversion of adjective and substantive.

9 *Tortive and errant*] Twisted and astray. The result is that the wood is cross-grained.

11 *suppose*] supposition, expectation.

14-15 *draw Bias and thwart*] turn awry, and cause to deviate from the straight line. Both "bias" and "thwart" are technical terms in the game of bowls, and refer to the checks which prevent the bowl from taking the straight course.

### SCENE III    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

And that unbodied figure of the thought  
 That gave 't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,  
 Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works,  
 And call them shames? which are indeed nought else  
 But the protractive trials of great Jove 20  
 To find persistive constancy in men:  
 The fineness of which metal is not found  
 In fortune's love; for then the bold and coward,  
 The wise and fool, the artist and unread,  
 The hard and soft, seem all affined and kin:  
 But in the wind and tempest of her frown,  
 Distinction with a broad and powerful fan,  
 Puffing at all, winnows the light away,  
 And what hath mass or matter, by itself  
 Lies rich in virtue and unmingled. 30

NEST. With due observance of thy godlike seat,  
 Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall apply  
 Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance  
 Lies the true proof of men: the sea being smooth,  
 How many shallow bauble boats dare sail  
 Upon her patient breast, making their way  
 With those of nobler bulk!  
 But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage  
 The gentle Thetis, and anon behold

---

19 *call them shames*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *thinke them shame*. "Them" obviously refers to "our works."

25 *affined*] of affinity to one another.

27 *broad*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *loud*.

33 *the reproof of chance*] the resistance to chance.

38 *Boreas*] the north wind; Aquilon is similarly used IV, v, 9, *infra*.

39 *Thetis*] a sea nymph; here put for the sea. Cf. *Pericles*, IV, iv, 39.



The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut, 40  
 Bounding between the two moist elements,  
 Like Perseus' horse: where's then the saucy boat,  
 Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now  
 Co-rivall'd greatness? either to harbour fled,  
 Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so  
 Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide  
 In storms of fortune: for in her ray and brightness  
 The herd hath more annoyance by the breese  
 Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind  
 Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks, 50  
 And flies fled under shade, why then the thing of  
 courage

As roused with rage with rage doth sympathize,  
 And with an accent tuned in selfsame key  
 Retorts to chiding fortune.

ULYSS. Agamemnon,  
 Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,  
 Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit,  
 In whom the tempers and the minds of all

---

Tethys, wife of Oceanus, is similarly used by Ovid, *Metam.*, II, 69, 509.

42 *Like Perseus' horse*] Lydgate mentions the old fable that when Perseus struck off Medusa's head, the flying horse Pegasus was "engendered of the blood." Cf. IV, v, 186, *infra*.

45 *a toast for Neptune*] a sop for Neptune. It was the old custom to soak in wine a piece of toast, to which is here likened "the saucy boat" on the overwhelming ocean.

48 *breese*] gadfly.

51-52 *the thing of courage . . . sympathize*] the tiger rages and roars furiously amid the fury of storms.

54 *Retorts*] Dyce's emendation of the original reading *Retires*.

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Should be shut up, hear what Ulysses speaks.

Besides the applause and approbation

The which, [*To Agamemnon*] most mighty for thy place  
and sway, 60

[*To Nestor*] And thou most reverend for thy stretch'd-out  
life,

I give to both your speeches, which were such

As Agamemnon and the hand of Greece

Should hold up high in brass, and such again

As venerable Nestor, hatch'd in silver,

Should with a loud o' air, strong as the axletree

On which heaven rides, knit all the Greekish ears

To his experienced tongue, yet let it please both,

Thou great, and wise, to hear Ulysses speak.

AGAM. Speak, Prince of Ithaca; and be 't of less  
expect

That matter needless, of importless burthen, 71

---

58 *shut up*] embodied.

62-64 *such As Agamemnon . . . Should hold up high in brass*] such that  
the spoken word of Agamemnon, who is the guiding hand of Greece,  
should be engraved in high relief on tablets of brass. "And the hand  
of Greece" is a descriptive clause in apposition with Agamemnon.  
At line 143, *infra*, Achilles is called "the *forehand* of our host."

65-68 *venerable Nestor . . . tongue*] The spoken word of old Nestor, en-  
graved in silver (the hue of his hair), should enchain, by bonds strong  
as the axis of the firmament, the hearing of all the Greeks.  
"Hatch'd in silver" is analogous to "high in brass" of the previous  
line, "hatch'd" being a familiar term in the art of engraving. There  
is also possibly an implied allusion to Nestor's silver hair.

70-74 *Speak . . . oracle*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the  
speech.

70 *of less expect*] of smaller expectation.

Divide thy lips, than we are confident,  
When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,  
We shall hear music, wit and oracle.

ULYSS. Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,  
And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,  
But for these instances.

The specialty of rule hath been neglected:  
And, look, how many Grecian tents do stand  
Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions. 80  
When that the general is not like the hive  
To whom the foragers shall all repair,  
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,  
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.  
The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre,  
Observe degree, priority and place,  
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office and custom, in all line of order:

---

73 *mastic jaws*] jaws full of rotten teeth, "mastic" being the gum ordinarily used for stopping decayed teeth. Cf. Lyly's *Midas*, III, ii, 138 *seq.*

*Petulus*. "O my teeth! deare barber, ease me . . .

O! what will rid me of this paine? . . .

*Licio*. Take *masticke* else.

*Petulus*. *Mastick's* a patch.

*Masticke* does many a foole's face catch."

Agamemnon pays Ulysses a somewhat inverted compliment.

77 *these instances*] the proofs that follow.

78 *The specialty of rule*] The essential quality attaching to rule.

81 *like the hive*] like the rallying-point, which the hive is for the bees.

85 *this centre*] this earth, which according to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, held the central place in the universe. Cf. III, ii, 175, *infra*.

87 *Insisture*] Persistency, permanent uniformity of motion.

# SCENE III    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

And therefore is the glorious planet Sol  
 In noble eminence enthroned and sphered 90  
 Amidst the other; whose medicinable eye  
 Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,  
 And posts like the commandment of a king,  
 Sans check to good and bad: but when the planets  
 In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
 What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,  
 What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,  
 Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,  
 Divert and crack, rend and deracinate  
 The unity and married calm of states 100  
 Quite from their fixure! O, when degree is shaken,  
 Which is the ladder to all high designs,  
 The enterprise is sick! How could communities,  
 Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,  
 Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,  
 The primogenitive and due of birth,  
 Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,  
 But by degree, stand in authentic place?  
 Take but degree away, untune that string,

91 *medicinable*] medicinal, curative.

92 *aspects*] astrological influences.

99 *deracinate*] root up.

100 *married calm*] calm of close lawful union.

101 *fixure*] fixity, stability. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, iii, 67: "The *fixure* of her eye has motion in it."

104 *brotherhoods*] guilds or fraternities.

105 *Peaceful commerce . . . shores*] The accent is on the second syllable of "commerce" and on the first and third syllables of "dividable," which means "divided," "widely parted."

106 *primogenitive*] Right of primogeniture.

And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets 110  
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters  
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,  
And make a sop of all this solid globe:  
Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead:  
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,  
Between whose endless jar justice resides,  
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.  
Then every thing includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite; 120  
And appetite, an universal wolf,  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,  
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,  
Follows the choking.  
And this neglect of degree it is  
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose  
It hath to climb. The general's disdain'd  
By him one step below; he by the next; 130  
That next by him beneath: so every step,  
Exempl'd by the first pace that is sick

111 *mere oppugnancy*] utter antagonism.

114 *imbecility*] infirmity, weakness.

127-129 *And this neglect . . . climb*] And this neglect or defiance of degree passes step by step from the foremost rank to ranks behind, with the design on the part of each man to aggrandise himself. Everybody is slighted by him who is his immediate inferior. "Neglection" is a rare form of "neglect."

132-133 *Exempl'd . . . superior*] Following the example of the first rank that is irritated by the one just ahead of it.

## SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

Of his superior, grows to an envious fever  
 Of pale and bloodless emulation:  
 And 't is this fever that keeps Troy on foot,  
 Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,  
 Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

NEST. Most wisely hath Ulysses here discover'd  
 The fever whereof all our power is sick.

AGAM. The nature of the sickness found, Ulysses, 140  
 What is the remedy?

ULYSS. The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns  
 The sinew and the forehead of our host,  
 Having his ear full of his airy fame,  
 Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent  
 Lies mocking our designs: with him, Patroclus,  
 Upon a lazy bed, the livelong day  
 Breaks scurril jests;

And with ridiculous and awkward action,  
 Which, slanderer, he imitation calls, 150  
 He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,  
 Thy topless deputation he puts on;  
 And, like a strutting player, whose conceit  
 Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich  
 To hear the wooden dialogue and sound

134 *bloodless*] sluggish, malignant; not vigorous nor active.

143 *the forehead*] the guiding hand or main-stay. Cf. line 63, *supra*,  
 "the hand of Greece."

144 *airy fame*] fame living in air or words.

151 *He pageants us*] He makes an exhibition of us, mimics us.

152 *Thy topless deputation*] The supreme and arbitrary power deputed (by  
 his fellow kings) to Agamemnon as chief of the army.

155 *the wooden dialogue and sound*] the sound of the actor's foot strutting  
 on the wooden stage.

'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage,  
 Such to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming  
 He acts thy greatness in: and when he speaks,  
 'T is like a chime a-mending; with terms unsquared,  
 Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd, 160  
 Would seem hyperboles. At this fusty stuff,  
 The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,  
 From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause;  
 Cries "Excellent! 't is Agamemnon just.  
 Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard,  
 As he being dress'd to some oration."  
 That's done; as near as the extremest ends  
 Of parallels, as like as Vulcan and his wife:  
 Yet god Achilles still cries "Excellent!  
 'T is Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus, 170  
 Arming to answer in a night alarm."  
 And then, forsooth, the faint defects of age  
 Must be the scene of mirth; to cough and spit,

156 *stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage*] strained or stilted stride and the stage of the theatre.

157 *to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming*] pitiable and exaggerated guise. *O'erwrested* (i. e., overwound) is Pope's emendation of *ore-rested*, the reading of the Quartos and Folios. "Wrest" is the instrument for tuning the harps by straining the wires. Cf. III, iii, 23, *infra*.

159 *unsquared*] inharmonious, rough, used of stones for building.

160 *Typhon*] a giant of classical mythology. Ovid in *Metam.*, V, 321, calls the monster "Typhoeus," which Golding translates "Typhon." Both forms have classical authority.

161 *fusty*] musty, mouldy.

166 *dress'd to some oration*] ready to speak an oration.

167-168 *as near as . . . wife*] with no resemblance at all to the truth, as unlike as Vulcan and Venus his wife.

171 *to answer in a night alarm*] to meet an attack by night.

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

And, with a palsy fumbling on his gorget,  
 Shake in and out the rivet: and at this sport  
 Sir Valour dies; cries "O, enough, Patroclus;  
 Or give me ribs of steel! I shall spilt all  
 In pleasure of my spleen." And in this fashion,  
 All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,  
 Severals and generals of grace exact, 180  
 Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,  
 Excitements to the field or speech for truce,  
 Success or loss, what is or is not, serves  
 As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.

NEST. And in the imitation of these twain,  
 Who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns  
 With an imperial voice, many are infect.  
 Ajax is grov'n self-will'd, and bears his head  
 In such a rein, in full as proud a place  
 As broad Achilles; keeps his tent like him; 190  
 Makes factious feasts; rails on our state of war  
 Bold as an oracle, and sets Thersites,  
 A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,

174 *gorget*] the armour for the throat or neck.

175 *Shake in . . . rivet*] With his trembling hand move the fastening pin  
 in and out of its place.

180 *Severals and generals of grace exact*] Precise marks of our individual  
 and general merit.

181 *preventions*] precautions.

184 *paradoxes*] absurdities.

185 *in the imitation*] owing to the imitation.

189 *In such a rein*] So haughtily, with such an air of disdain, like a spirited  
 warhorse tightly reined.

190 *broad*] puffed out with pride.

191 *our state of war*] our council of war.



To match us in comparisons with dirt,  
 To weaken and discredit our exposure,  
 How rank soever rounded in with danger.

ULYSS. They tax our policy and call it cowardice,  
 Count wisdom as no member of the war,  
 Forestall prescience, and esteem no act  
 But that of hand: the still and mental parts  
 That do contrive how many hands shall strike  
 When fitness calls them on, and know by measure  
 Of their observant toil the enemies' weight,—  
 Why, this hath not a finger's dignity;  
 They call this bed-work mappery, closet-war:  
 So that the ram that batters down the wall,  
 For the great swing and rudeness of his poise,  
 They place before his hand that made the engine,

200

195-196 *To weaken . . . with danger*] To depreciate our ability to stand exposure to the enemy, however palpable is the danger by which we are surrounded.

199 *Forestall*] Precondemn.

204 *a finger's dignity*] the worth of a finger pointing the way.

205 *this bed-work mappery*] "Mappery," *i. e.*, the making of maps or plans, is unknown elsewhere in the literature of the time. With this punctuation "bed-work" is an epithet, meaning either "reposeful" (*i. e.*, of the character of work done at rest in bed), or "ground-work" ("bed" being used in the sense of "base" or "foundation" of a structure). If a comma be placed after "bed-work" (as is commonly done), that word would be a substantive, but might still be used seriously for "foundation" or "ground-work" to which "mappery" (with a scornful intention) and "closet-war" are in contemptuous apposition. This interpretation seems preferable to treating "bed-work" as itself a term of contempt, meaning "idling in bed" in apposition to "this."

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Or those that with the fineness of their souls  
By reason guide his execution.

210

NEST. Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse  
Makes many Thetis' sons. [Tucket.

AGAM. What trumpet look, Menelaus.

MEN. From Troy.

*Enter ÆNEAS*

AGAM. What would you 'fore our tent?

ÆNE. Is this great Agamemnor's tent, I pray you?

AGAM. Even this.

ÆNE. May one that is a herald and a prince  
Do a fair message to his kingly ears?

AGAM. With surety stronger than Achilles' arm  
'Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice  
Call Agamemnon head and general.

220

ÆNE. Fair leave and large security. How may  
A stranger to those most imperial looks  
Know them from eyes of other mortals?

AGAM.

How!

ÆNE. Ay:

I ask, that I might waken reverence,  
And bid the cheek be ready with a blush

209 *the fineness*] the subtle capacity.

212 *Makes many Thetis' sons*] is the equivalent of many Achilles. Thetis was mother of Achilles.

224 *A stranger . . . looks*] The war was in its seventh year, and the Trojan Æneas must have had many opportunities of making acquaintance with the personal appearance of the leader of the Greek army. Shakespeare apparently assumed that the Greek warriors concealed their features in close helmets. Cf. line 296, *infra* (Nestor's), "gold beaver" and IV, v, 195 (of Hector), "thy countenance, still lock'd in steel."

Modest as morning when she coldly eyes

The youthful Phœbus:

230

Which is that god in office, guiding men?

Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon?

AGAM. This Trojan scorns us; or the men of Troy  
Are ceremonious courtiers.

ÆNE. Courtiers as free, as debonair, unarm'd,  
As bending angels; that's their fame in peace:  
But when they would seem soldiers, they have galls,  
Good arms, strong joints, true swords; and, Jove's  
accord,

Nothing so full of heart. But peace, Æneas,

Peace, Trojan; lay thy finger on thy lips!

240

The worthiness of praise distains his worth,

If that the praised himself bring the praise forth:

But what the repining enemy commends,

That breath fame blows; that praise, sole pure, tran-  
scends.

AGAM. Sir, you of Troy, call you yourself Æneas?

ÆNE. Ay, Greek, that is my name.

AGAM. What's your affair, I pray you?

229-230 *morning . . . Phœbus*] a strained reference to the purple light of the dawn (the goddess Aurora), awaiting the full rising of the sun-god (Phœbus Apollo).

237 *have galls*] have feelings of rancour.

238-239 *and, Jove's accord . . . heart*] and with Jove in accord or on their side (an ablative absolute, "Jove probante"), nothing is so full of courage.

241-242 *The worthiness . . . forth*] For the general sentiment that "self-praise is no recommendation," cf. II, iii, 150-153, *infra*, and *All's Well*, I, iii, 5-7: "We . . . make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them."

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

ÆNE. Sir, pardon; 't is for Agamemnon's ears.

AGAM. He hears nought privately that comes from  
Troy.

ÆNE. Nor I from Troy come not to whisper him: 260  
I bring a trumpet to awake his ear,  
To set his sense on the attentive bent,  
And then to speak.

AGAM. Speak frankly as the wind;  
It is not Agamemnon's sleeping hour:  
That thou shalt know, Trojan, he is awake,  
He tells thee so himself.

ÆNE. Trumpet, blow loud,  
Send thy brass voice through all these lazy tents;  
And every Greek of mettle, let him know,  
What Troy means fairly shall be spoke aloud.

[Trumpet sounds.

We have, great Agamemnon, here in Troy 260  
A prince call'd Hector — Priam is his father —  
Who in this dull and long-continued truce  
Is rusty grown: he bade me take a trumpet,  
And to this purpose speak. Kings, princes, lords!  
If there be one among the fair'st of Greece,  
That holds his honour higher than his ease,  
That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril,  
That knows his valour and knows not his fear,  
That loves his mistress more than in confession  
With truant vows to her own lips he loves, 270

262 *long-continued truce*] Such a truce is inconsistent with the speech of  
Troilus, I, i, 1, *seq.*, and the statement (I, ii, 32-33), that "yesterday  
(Ajax) coped Hector in the battle."

269-270 *in confession . . . vows*] in profession while making idle vows.

And dare avow her beauty and her worth  
 In other arms than hers — to him this challenge.  
 Hector, in view of Trojans and of Greeks,  
 Shall make it good, or do his best to do it,  
 He hath a lady, wiser, fairer, truer,  
 Than ever Greek did compass in his arms;  
 And will to-morrow with his trumpet call  
 Midway between your tents and walls of Troy,  
 To rouse a Grecian that is true in love:  
 If any come, Hector shall honour him; 280  
 If none, he'll say in Troy when he retires,  
 The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth  
 The splinter of a lance. Even so much.

AGAM. This shall be told our lovers, Lord Æneas;  
 If none of them have soul in such a kind,  
 We left them all at home: but we are soldiers;  
 And may that soldier a mere recreant prove,  
 That means not, hath not, or is not in love!  
 If then one is, or hath, or means to be,  
 That one meets Hector; if none else, I am he. 290

NEST. Tell him of Nestor, one that was a man  
 When Hector's grandsire suck'd: he is old now;  
 But if there be not in our Grecian host  
 One noble man that hath one spark of fire,  
 To answer for his love, tell him from me  
 I'll hide my silver beard in a gold beaver,

282 *sunburnt*] homely, plain. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 287-288: "I am  
*sunburnt*; I may sit in a corner, and cry heigh-ho for a husband!"

288 *means not, hath not*] means not to be, hath not been.

293 *host*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *mould*, i. e., nature,  
 character.

SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

And in my vantbrace put this wither'd brawn,  
 And meeting him will tell him that my lady  
 Was fairer than his grandam, and as chaste  
 As may be in the world. his youth in flood, 300  
 I'll prove this truth with my three drops of blood.

ÆNE. Now heavens forbid such scarcity of youth!

ULYSS. Amen.

AGAM. Fair Lord Æneas, let me touch your hand;  
 To our pavilion shall I lead you, sir.  
 Achilles shall have word of this intent;  
 So shall each lord of Greece, from tent to tent:  
 Yourself shall feast with us before you go,  
 And find the welcome of a noble foe.

[*Exeunt all but Ulysses and Nestor.*]

ULYSS. Nestor!

310

NEST. What says Ulysses?

ULYSS. I have a young conception in my brain;  
 Be you my time to bring it to some shape.

NEST. What is 't?

ULYSS. This 't is:

Blunt wedges rive hard knots: the seeded pride  
 That hath to this maturity blown up  
 In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd,  
 Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil,  
 To overbulk us all.

---

297 *vantbrace*] armour for the forearm; from the French "*avantbras*."

300 *his youth in flood*] though his youth is at its full strength.

313 *Be you my time . . . shape*] Play the ripening part of time for me in bringing this idea to mature shape.

316 *the seeded pride*] the pride that is prolific in seed.

319 *nursery*] plantation.

NEST. Well, and how? 320

ULYSS. This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,  
However it is spread in general name,  
Relates in purpose only to Achilles.

NEST. The purpose is perspicuous even as substance,  
Whose grossness little characters sum up:  
And, in the publication, make no strain,  
But that Achilles, were his brain as barren  
As banks of Libya, — though, Apollo knows,  
'T is dry enough — will, with great speed of judgement,  
Ay, with celerity, find Hector's purpose 330  
Pointing on him.

ULYSS. And wake him to the answer, think you?

NEST. Yes, 't is most meet: who may you else oppose,  
That can from Hector bring his honour off,  
If not Achilles? Though 't be a sportful combat,  
Yet in this trial much opinion dwells;  
For here the Trojans taste our dear'st repute  
With their finest palate: and trust to me, Ulysses,  
Our imputation shall be oddly poised  
In this wild action; for the success, 340

320 *overbulk us*] tower over us.

324-325 *The purpose . . . sum up*] The purpose is as plain as material property, the extent of which is indicated by little figures or ciphers. Cf. *Hen. V*, Act I, Prologue, 15-16: "a crooked figure may Attest in little place a million."

326 *And, in the publication . . . strain*] And when the challenge is published, (its meaning will) make no strain (on Achilles' intelligence).

336 *much opinion dwells*] much credit is at stake.

339 *Our imputation shall be oddly poised*] Our reputation shall be weighed unevenly, unequally, not in precise agreement with the circumstances.

340-342 *for the success . . . general*] for the issue, though really only

Although particular, shall give a scantling  
Of good or bad unto the general;  
And in such indexes, although small pricks  
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen  
The baby figure of the giant mass  
Of things to come at large. It is supposed  
He that meets Hector issues from our choice:  
And choice, being mutual act of all our souls,  
Makes merit her election, and doth boil,  
As 't were from forth us all, a man distill'd  
Out of our virtues; who miscarrying,  
What heart from hence receives the conquering part,  
To steel a strong opinion to themselves?  
Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,  
In no less working than are swords and bows  
Directive by the limbs.

350

---

affecting an individual, shall lend a measure of good or ill report to the whole community. "Scantling" means "a small piece of anything."

343-346 *And in such indexes . . . large*] Preliminary tables of contents (found at the beginning of books), although they are small marks compared with the volume to which they are prefixed, indicate in miniature the great mass of what is to follow in full. "Indexes" may be either preliminary tables of contents or the "indexes" which then came at the opening of the volume.

349 *Makes merit her election*] Makes merit the object of her choice, seeks out the best man.

351-353 *who miscarrying . . . themselves*] if the man of her choice fail, what heart among us will draw from that misfortune any hope of playing the conqueror's rôle, so as to strengthen our self-confidence.

354-356 *Which . . . by the limbs*] Thus the Folio. The lines are omitted from the Quartos. This difficult passage seems to mean that when a man entertains confidence in himself and his champion, then his



ULYSS. Give pardon to my speech;  
 Therefore 't is meet Achilles meet not Hector.  
 Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,  
 And think, perchance, they'll sell; if not, 360  
 The lustre of the better yet to show,  
 Shall show the better. Do not consent  
 That ever Hector and Achilles meet;  
 For both our honour and our shame in this  
 Are dogg'd with two strange followers.

NEST. I see them not with my old eyes: what are  
 they?

ULYSS. What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,  
 Were he not proud, we all should share with him:  
 But he already is too insolent;  
 And we were better parch in Afric sun 370  
 Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,  
 Should he 'scape Hector fair: if he were foil'd,  
 Why then, we did our main opinion crush  
 In taint of our best man. No, make a lottery;  
 And by device let blockish Ajax draw

limbs are his responsive instruments, as alert and obedient to direction as the swords and bows which his limbs wield.

361-362 *The lustre . . . show the better*] Thus the Folios. The Quarto reads, less satisfactorily, *the luster of the better shall exceed By shewing the worst first*. "Yet to show" of course means "yet to be shown."

371 *salt scorn*] bitter scorn.

373-374 *we did . . . our best man*] we should destroy our main credit with the disgrace of our best champion.

375 *let blockish Ajax*] Shakespeare followed Ovid, *Metam.*, XIII, in making Ajax throughout this play a self-willed and stupid braggart. Golding, translating Ovid, calls Ajax "dolt and grosse head,"

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

The sort to fight with Hector: among ourselves  
 Give him allowance for the better man;  
 For that will physic the great Myrmidon  
 Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall  
 His crest that prouder than blue Iris bends. 380  
 If the dull brainless Ajax come safe off,  
 We 'll dress him up in voices: if he fail,  
 Yet go we under our opinion still  
 That we have better men. But, hit or miss,  
 Our project's life this shape of sense assumes,  
 Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes.

NEST. Ulysses,  
 Now I begin to relish thy advice;  
 And I will give a taste of it forthwith  
 To Agamemnon: go we to him straight. 390  
 Two curs shall tame each other: pride alone  
 Must tarre the mastiffs on, as 't were their bone.

[*Exeunt.*

"having neither wit nor knowledge." Neither Homer nor his English  
 adapters make Ajax a mere fool.

376 *The sort*] The lot.

377 *Give him allowance*] Represent him.

379 *Who broils . . . applause*] Who is warmed to fever heat by loud  
 applause.

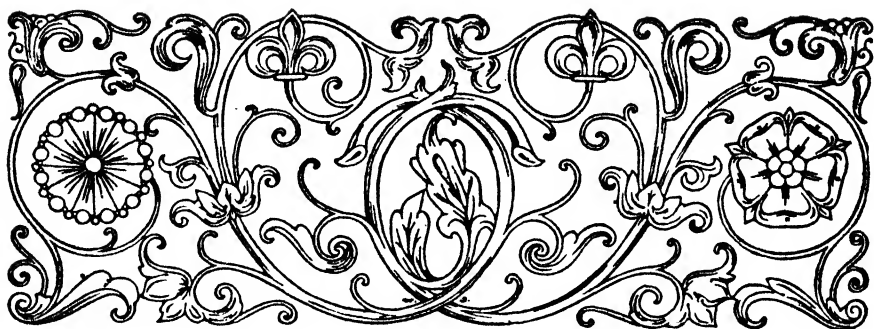
*fall*] let fall, lower.

380 *blue Iris*] the rainbow.

382 *dress him . . . voices*] trim him up, or adorn him with vociferous  
 praise.

383 *go we under*] we may submit to, we may uphold.

392 *tarre the mastiffs on*] incite the dogs to fight.

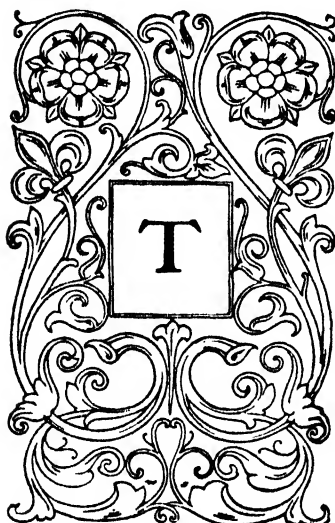


ACT SECOND — SCENE I

THE GRECIAN CAMP

*Enter AJAX and THERSITES*

AJAX



THERSITES!

THER. Agamemnon — how if he had boils — full, all over, generally?

AJAX. Thersites!

THER. And those boils did run? — Say so, — did not the general run then? were not that a botchy core?

AJAX. Dog!

THER. Then would come some matter from him; I see none now.

AJAX. Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear? Feel, then.

*[Strikes him. 11]*

2 *boils*] Theobald's correction of the old spelling *biles*.

6 *botchy core*] core or kernel of an ulcer or boil. Some pun on "core" and "corps," which is similarly pronounced, has been suggested.

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

HER. The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel beef-witted lord!

AJAX. Speak then, thou vinewed'st leaven, speak: I will beat thee into handsomeness.

HER. I shall sooner rail thee into wit and holiness: but, I think, thy horse will sooner con an oration than thou learn a prayer without book. Thou canst strike, canst thou? a red murrain o' thy jade's tricks!

AJAX. Toadstool, learn me the proclamation. 20

HER. Dost thou think I have no sense, thou strikest me thus?

AJAX. The proclamation!

HER. Thou art proclaimed a fool, I think.

AJAX. Do not, porpentine, do not; my fingers itch.

HER. I would thou didst itch from head to foot, and I had the scratching of thee; I would make thee the loathsomest scab in Greece. When thou art forth in the incursions, thou strikest as slow as another.

12 *The plague of Greece*] Apollo, in the Homeric story, had visited the Greek camp with a pestilence.

12-13 *mongrel beef-witted lord*] Ajax was a mongrel, because his father was a Greek and his mother a Trojan. Cf. I, ii, 13-14, note. For "beef-witted" cf. *Tw. Night*, I, iii, 80-82: "I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit."

14 *vinewed'st leaven*] most mouldy leaven: Johnson's emendation of the Quarto *unsalted leaven*, which probably means "malignity without wit," and the Folio *whinid'st leaven*. "Vinew," (*i. e.*, mouldy) is not uncommon and survives in dialects as "vinny."

19 *a red murrain*] Cf. *Temp.*, I, ii, 364: "The red plague."

25 *porpentine*] a common form of "porcupine."

28-29 *When thou . . . incursions*] When you are engaged in the sorties against Troy.

AJAX. I say, the proclamation! 30

THER. Thou grumblest and raillest every hour on Achilles, and thou art as full of envy at his greatness as Cerberus is at Proserpina's beauty, ay, that thou barkest at him.

AJAX. Mistress Thersites!

THER. Thou shouldst strike him.

AJAX. Cobloaf!

THER. He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor breaks a biscuit.

AJAX. [*Beating him*] You whoreson cur!

THER. Do, do. 40

AJAX. Thou stool for a witch!

THER. Ay, do, do; thou sodden-witted lord! thou hast no more brain than I have in mine elbows; an assinego may tutor thee: thou scurvy-valiant ass! thou art here but to thrash Trojans; and thou art bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave. If thou use to beat me, I will begin at thy heel and

33 *Cerberus . . . Proserpina's beauty*] There seems no classical authority for this alleged infatuation of Cerberus for Proserpine.

35 *him*] i. e., Achilles.

36 *Cobloaf*] A crusty uneven loaf. Cf. V, i, 5, *infra*: "crusty batch of nature" and note.

37 *pun*] pound.

41 *Thou stool . . . witch*] Witches were tied to stools for purposes of torture.

43-44 *assinego*] a Portuguese word for "ass." Thus Pope. The early editions read *Asinico*, which is a Spanish diminutive of "asno," an ass.

Both words seem to have been familiar in the Elizabethan vernacular.

45-46 *bought and sold*] made a fool of, deluded.

# SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

tell what thou art by inches, thou thing of no bowels, thou!

AJAX. You dog!

THER. You scurvy loid!

50

AJAX. [*Beating him*] You cur!

THER. Mars his idiot! do, rudeness; do, camel, do, do.

*Enter* ACHILLES *and* PATROCLUS

ACHIL. Why, how now, Ajax! wherefore do ye thus? How now, Theisites! what's the matter, man?

THER. You see him there, do you?

ACHIL. Ay; what's the matter?

THER. Nay, look upon him.

ACHIL. So I do: what's the matter?

THER. Nay, but regard him well.

ACHIL. "Well!" why, so I do.

60

THER. But yet you look not well upon him; for, who-soever you take him to be, he is Ajax.

ACHIL. I know that, fool.

THER. Ay, but that fool knows not himself.

AJAX. Therefore I beat thee.

THER. Lo, lo, lo, lo, what modicums of wit he utters! his evasions have ears thus long. I have bobbed his brain more than he has beat my bones: I will buy nine sparrows for a penny, and his pia mater is not worth the

66 *modicums*] fragments.

67 *evasions . . . thus long*] his circuitous talk suggests asses' ears.

*bobbed*] buffeted; with some vague suggestion of deluding or tricking, in which sense the verb is used, III, i, 65, *infra*.

69 *pia mater*] a membrane covering the brain; commonly used for the brain itself.

ninth part of a sparrow. This lord, Achilles, Ajax, who 70 wears his wit in his belly and his guts in his head, I'll tell you what I say of him.

ACHIL. What?

THER. I say, this Ajax —      [*Ajax offers to strike him.*]

ACHIL. Nay, good Ajax.

THER. Has not so much wit —

ACHIL. Nay, I must hold you.

THER. As will stop the eye of Helen's needle, for whom he comes to fight.

ACHIL. Peace, fool! 80

THER. I would have peace and quietness, but the fool will not: he there: that he: look you there!

AJAX. O thou damned cur! I shall —

ACHIL. Will you set your wit to a fool's?

THER. No, I warrant you; for a fool's will shame it.

PATR. Good words, Thersites.

ACHIL. What's the quarrel?

AJAX. I bade the vile owl go learn me the tenour of the proclamation, and he rails upon me.

THER. I serve thee not. 90

AJAX. Well, go to, go to.

THER. I serve here voluntary.

ACHIL. Your last service was sufferance, 't was not voluntary; no man is beaten voluntary: Ajax was here the voluntary, and you as under an impress.

THER. E'en so; a great deal of your wit too lies in

---

84 *set your wit to*] match your wit against. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, III, i, 123:

“*set his wit to so foolish a bird.*”

95 *under an impress*] under enforced service.

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

your sinews, or else there be liars. Hector shall have a great catch, if he knock out either of your brains: a' were as good crack a fusty nut with no kernel.

ACHIL. What, with me too, Thersites? 100

THER. There 's Ulysses and old Nestor, whose wit was mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes, yoke you like draught-oxen, and make you plough up the wars.

ACHIL. What? what?

THER. Yes, good sooth: to, Achilles! to, Ajax! to!

AJAX. I shall cut out your tongue.

THER. 'T is no matter; I shall speak as much as thou afterwards.

PATR. No more words, Thersites; peace! 109

THER. I will hold my peace when Achilles' brooch bids me, shall I?

ACHIL. There's for you, Patroclus.

THER. I will see you hanged, like clotpoles, ere I come any more to your tents: I will keep where there is wit stirring, and leave the faction of fools. [*Exit.*]

PATR. A good riddance.

ACHIL. Marry, this, sir, is proclaim'd through all our host:

That Hector, by the fifth hour of the sun,  
Will with a trumpet 'twixt our tents and Troy  
To-morrow morning call some knight to arms

120

---

105 *to . . . to . . . to!*] The preposition is used like an imperative exclamation, "get on, get on! gee-up!" addressed to "draught-oxen."

110 *brooch*] ornament, hanger on. Thus the old editions. Rowe substituted *brach*, i. e., bitch. Cf. V, i, 16, *infra*.



That hath a stomach, and such a one that dare  
Maintain — I know not what: 't is trash. Farewell.

AJAX. Farewell. Who shall answer him?

ACHIL. I know not; 't is put to lottery; otherwise  
He knew his man.

AJAX. O, meaning you. I will go learn more of it.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — TROY

A ROOM IN PRIAM'S PALACE

*Enter* PRIAM, HECTOR, TROILUS, PARIS, and HELENUS

PRI. After so many hours, lives, speeches spent,  
Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:  
“Deliver Helen, and all damage else,  
As honour, loss of time, travail, expense,  
Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed  
In hot digestion of this cormorant war,  
Shall be struck off.” Hector, what say you to't?

HECT. Though no man lesser fears the Greeks than I  
As far as toucheth my particular,  
Yet, dread Priam,  
There is no lady of more softer bowels,  
More spongy to suck in the sense of fear,  
More ready to cry out “Who knows what follows?”  
Than Hector is: the wound of peace is surety,

10

121 *a stomach*] an appetite for fighting.

9 *my particular*] my individual sentiment.

14-15 *surety, Surety secure*:] over-confidence, false security, which is  
careless of peril.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

Surety secure: but modest doubt is call'd  
 The beacon of the wise, the tent that searches  
 To the bottom of the worst. Let Helen go.  
 Since the first sword<sup>1</sup> was drawn about this question,  
 Every tithe soul, 'mongst many thousand dismes,  
 Hath been as dear as Helen; I mean, of ours: 20  
 If we have lost so many tenths o' ours,  
 To guard a thing not ours, nor worth to us,  
 Had it our name, the value of one ten,  
 What merit's in that reason which denies  
 The yielding o' her up?

TRO. Fie, fie, my brother!  
 Weigh you the worth and honour of a king,  
 So great as our dread father, in a scale  
 Of common cunces? will you with counters sum  
 The past proportion of his infinite?  
 And buckle in a waist most fathomless 30  
 With spans and inches so diminutive  
 As fears and reasons? fie, for godly shame!

HEL. No marvel, though you bite so sharp at reasons,  
 You are so empty of them. Should not our father  
 Bear the great sway of his affairs with reasons,  
 Because your speech hath none that tells him so?

---

16 *the tent*] the surgical probe.

19 *tithe . . . dismes*] Both "tithe" and "disme" mean a tenth, and are words applicable to every tenth man on the roll-call of an army, whose lives were always liable to be sacrificed to the exigencies of war.

22-23 *nor worth . . . the value of one ten*] nor, were Helen a Trojan woman instead of a Greek, would she be to us Trojans of the value of a single one of our soldiers.

29 *The past proportion of his infinite*] his infinite, illimitable immensity.

**You fur your gloves with reason. Here are your reasons:**

You know a sword employ'd is perilous, 40

Who marvels then, when Helenus beholds

The very wings of reason to his heels,

Or like a star disorb'd? Nay, if we talk of reason,

Should have hare hearts, would they but fat their

With this cramm'd reason: reason and respect

50

TRU.      <sup>8</sup> What's aught, but as 't is valued?

It holds his estimate and dignity

As well wherein 't is precious of itself

49 *reason and respect*] anxious fear of consequences. Cf. *Lucrece*, 275:  
 "Respect and reason wait on wrinkled age!"

**52** *The holding*] To hold or keep.

54-56 *It holds . . . the prizer*] "His estimate and dignity" means "its estimation and worth." "Prizer" means "valuer" or "appraiser." The sentence means that the value of a thing depends not alone on its inherent worth, but on the personal temperament of the valuer.

As in the prizer: 't is mad idolatry  
To make the service greater than the god;  
And the will dotes, that is attributive  
To what infection itself affects,  
Without some image of the affected merit.

60

TRO. I take to-day a wife, and my election  
Is led on in the conduct of my will;  
My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,  
Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores  
Of will and judgement: how may I avoid,  
Although my will distaste what it elected,  
The wife I chose? there can be no evasion  
To blench from this, and to stand firm by honour.  
We turn not back the silks upon the merchant  
When we have soil'd them, nor the remainder viands 70  
We do not throw in unrespective sieve,  
Because we now are full. It was thought meet  
Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks:  
Your breath of full consent bellied his sails;

---

58-60 *And the will dotes . . . merit*] The will is weak and foolish that attributes to an object qualities which it excessively admires, when there is no semblance of the favoured merit in the object itself. *Attributive* is the Quarto reading, for which the Folios substitute *inclineable*.  
62 *in the conduct of my will*] under the guidance of my free will. But "will" (as in lines 63 and 65, *infra*) here has much of the significance of "lust" or "sensual passion."

64 *traded*] professional, expert.

67-68 *no evasion To blench*] no means of escape so as to shrink.

71 *unrespective sieve*] receptacle for things of no account, common voider. Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads *same* for *sieve*; the other Folios read *place*; *sink* has been suggested for *sieve*. But the latter was often applied to the basket, in which refuse was collected.

The seas and winds, old wranglers, took a truce,  
 And did him service: he touch'd the ports desired;  
 And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive  
 He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness  
 Wrinkles Apollo's and makes stale the morning.  
 Why keep we her? the Grecians keep our aunt: 80  
 Is she worth keeping? why, she is a pearl,  
 Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,  
 And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants.  
 If you'll avouch 't was wisdom Paris went,  
 As you must needs, for you all cried "Go, go,"  
 If you'll confess he brought home noble prize,  
 As you must needs, for you all clapp'd your hands,  
 And cried "Inestimable!" why do you now  
 The issue of your proper wisdoms rate,  
 And do a deed that Fortune never did, 90  
 Beggar the estimation which you prized  
 Richer than sea and land? O, theft most base,  
 That we have stol'n what we do fear to keep!  
 But thieves unworthy of a thing so stol'n,

77 *an old aunt*] A reference to Hesione, sister of Priam, and thus Paris's aunt, who had been taken prisoner by Hercules in his attack on Troy and had been given as wife to Telamon, king of Salamis, by whom she was mother of Ajax. Cf. IV, v, 120, *infra*, and note.

79 *Wrinkles Apollo's*] Makes Apollo wrinkled or ugly by comparison. *stale*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less forcibly, *pale*.

82 *Whose price . . . ships*] A reminiscence of Marlowe's famous apostrophe to Helen (*Faustus*, V, iii, 91): "Was this the face that *launch'd a thousand ships*?"

89 *rate*] censure.

90 *and do a deed . . . never did*] and act with greater fickleness than Fortune ever did.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

That in their country did them that disgrace,  
We fear to warrant in our native place!

CAS. [*Within*] Cry, Trojans, cry!

PRI. What noise? what shriek is this?

TRO. 'T is our mad sister, I do know her voice.

CAS. [*Within*] Cry, Trojans!

HECT. It is Cassandra.

100

*Enter CASSANDRA, raving, with her hair about her ears*

CAS. Cry, Trojans, cry! lend me ten thousand eyes,  
And I will fill them with prophetic tears.

HECT. Peace, sister, peace!

CAS. Virgins and boys, mid age and wrinkled eld,  
Soft infancy that nothing canst but cry,  
Add to my clamours! let us pay betimes  
A moiety of that mass of moan to come.

Cry, Trojans, cry! practise your eyes with tears!

Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilion stand;

Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.

110

Cry, Trojans, cry! a Helen and a woe:

Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go. [*Exit.*

HECT. Now, youthful Troilus, do not these high strains  
Of divination in our sister work

95-96 *That in their country . . . place*] (a thing) the theft of which did the Greeks in their own land such injury to their fame as we shrink from justifying at home.

104 *eld*] old age. Theobald's emendation of the Quarto *elders*, and the Folio *old*.

109 *Ilion*] See note on I, i, 100, *supra*.

110 *Our firebrand brother, Paris*] Paris's mother, Hecuba, dreamt before his birth that she would be delivered of a firebrand or lighted torch.

Some touches of remorse? or is your blood  
So madly hot that no discourse of reason,  
Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause,  
Can qualify the same?

TRO. Why, brother Hector,  
We may not think the justness of each act  
Such and no other than event doth form it; 120  
Nor once deject the courage of our minds,  
Because Cassandra's mad: her brain-sick raptures  
Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel  
Which hath our several honours all engaged  
To make it gracious. For my private part,  
I am no more touch'd than all Priam's sons:  
And Jove forbid there should be done amongst us  
Such things as might offend the weakest spleen  
To fight for and maintain!

PAR. Else might the world convince of levity 130  
As well my undertakings as your counsels:  
But I attest the gods, your full consent  
Gave wings to my propension, and cut off  
All fears attending on so dire a project.  
For what, alas, can these my single arms?  
What propugnation is in one man's valour,  
To stand the push and enmity of those

117 *bad success*] bad issue or result.

123 *distaste*] spoil the taste of.

125 *To make it gracious*] To show it to advantage, to set it off.

128 *weakest spleen*] feeblest heart or spirit.

130 *convince*] convict.

133 *propension*] propensity, inclination. Cf. line 190, *infra*.

136 *propugnation*] force of resistance.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

This quarrel would excite? Yet, I protest,  
 Were I alone to pass the difficulties,  
 And had as ample power as I have will, 140  
 Paris should ne'er retract what he hath done,  
 Nor faint in the pursuit.

PRI. Paris, you speak  
 Like one besotted on your sweet delights:  
 You have the honey still, but these the gall;  
 So to be valiant is no praise at all.

PAR. Sir, I propose not merely to myself  
 The pleasures such a beauty brings with it;  
 But I would have the soil of her fair rape  
 Wiped off in honourable keeping her. 150  
 What treason were it to the ransack'd queen,  
 Disgrace to your great worths, and shame to me,  
 Now to deliver her possession up  
 On terms of base compulsion! Can it be  
 That so degenerate a strain as this  
 Should once set footing in your generous bosoms?  
 There 's not the meanest spirit on our party,  
 Without a heart to dare, or sword to draw,  
 When Helen is defended, nor none so noble,  
 Whose life were ill bestow'd, or death unfamed,  
 Where Helen is the subject: then, I say, 160  
 Well may we fight for her, whom, we know well,  
 The world's large spaces cannot parallel.

HECT. Paris and Troilus, you have both said well;

---

148 *rape*] capture, carrying off; used here without any implication of sexual violence.

150 *ransack'd*] forcibly seized or captured.

154 *strain*] impulse, sentiment.



And on the cause and question now in hand  
 Have glozed, but superficially; not much  
 Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought  
 Unfit to hear moral philosophy.  
 The reasons you allege do more conduce  
 To the hot passion of distemper'd blood,  
 Than to make up a free determination  
 'Twixt right and wrong; for pleasure and revenge  
 Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice  
 Of any true decision. Nature craves  
 All dues be render'd to their owners: now,  
 What nearer debt in all humanity  
 Than wife is to the husband? If this law  
 Of nature be corrupted through affection,

170

---

165 *glozed*] speciously explained or expounded.

166-167 *whom Aristotle . . . moral philosophy*] Aristotle, whom it is a very obvious anachronism to mention here, in his *Nicomachean Ethics* writes that young men are unfitted for the study of "*political* [not *moral*] philosophy." But the context shows that Aristotle had in mind the ethics of civil society which are indistinguishable from morals. The Aristotelian maxim, in the slightly irregular shape that Shakespeare adopts here, long enjoyed proverbial currency in Western Europe. Erasmus quotes it thus in his *Colloquia* (1531), and many French and Italian writers follow his example. Bacon in his *Advancement of Learning* (1605), Bk. II, p. 255 (*ed.* Kitchin), also cites Aristotle to the effect that young men are not fit auditors of *moral* philosophy. Sceptics of Shakespeare's responsibility for the plays have made much of this last coincidence, in ignorance of the universal vogue of the Aristotelian maxim in the emended shape throughout European literature of the sixteenth century.

172 *ears more deaf than adders*] an old superstition. Cf. *Psalms*, lvi, 4, "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear," and 2 *Hen. VI*, III, ii, 76.

177 *through affection*] by the working of carnal affection or lust.

## SCENE II      TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

And that great minds, of partial indulgence  
 To their benumbed wills, resist the same,  
 There is a law in each well-order'd nation 180  
 To curb those raging appetites that are  
 Most disobedient and refractory.  
 If Helen then be wife to Sparta's king,  
 As it is known she is, these moral laws  
 Of nature and of nations speak aloud  
 To have her back return'd: thus to persist  
 In doing wrong extenuates not wrong,  
 But makes it much more heavy. Hector's opinion  
 Is this in way of truth: yet, ne'ertheless,  
 My spritely brethren, I propend to you 190  
 In resolution to keep Helen still;  
 For 't is a cause that hath no mean dependance  
 Upon our joint and several dignities.

Tro. Why, there you touch'd the life of our design:  
 Were it not glory that we more affected  
 Than the performance of our heaving spleens,  
 I would not wish a drop of Trojan blood  
 Spent more in her defence. But, worthy Hector,  
 She is a theme of honour and renown;  
 A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds, 200

---

178-179 *of partial indulgence . . . wills*] through the inequitable indulgence of their desires, numbed to righteous considerations.

190-191 *propend . . . resolution*] incline to your resolve. Cf. "propension," line 133, *supra*.

192-193 *hath no mean . . . dignities*] has important concern with our collective and individual honour.

196 *the performance . . . spleens*] the mere indulgence of our swelling angry passions.

Whose present courage may beat down our foes,  
And fame in time to come canonize us:  
For, I presume, brave Hector would not lose  
So rich advantage of a promised glory  
As smiles upon the forehead of this action  
For the wide world's revenue.

HECT. I am yours,  
 You valiant offspring of great Priamus.  
 I have a roisting challenge sent amongst  
 The dull and factious nobles of the Greeks,  
 Will strike amazement to their drowsy spirits: 210  
 I was advertised their great general slept,  
 Whilst emulation in the army crept:  
 This, I presume, will wake him. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III — THE GRECIAN CAMP  
BEFORE THE TENT OF ACHILLES

*Enter* THERSITES, *solus*

**THER.** How now, Thersites! what, lost in the labyrinth of thy fury! Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus? he beats me, and I rail at him: O, worthy satisfaction! would it were otherwise; that I could beat him, whilst he railed at me. 'Sfoot, I'll learn to conjure and raise devils, but I'll see some issue of my spiteful execrations.

**202 canonize]** invariably accented by Shakespeare on the second syllable.

208 *roisting*] blustering, swaggering.

**212 emulation]** envy, jealousy, factiousness.

5 'S/oot] God's foot. A common oath.

## SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Then there 's Achilles, a rare engineer. If Troy be not taken till these two undermine it, the walls will stand till they fall of themselves. O thou great thunder-darter of Olympus, forget that thou art Jove, the king of gods, and, Mercury, lose all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that little little less than little wit from them that they have! which short-armed ignorance itself knows is so abundant scarce, it will not in circumvention deliver a fly from a spider, without drawing their massy irons and cutting the web. After this, the vengeance on the whole camp! or, rather, the Neapolitan bone-ache! for that, methinks, is the curse dependant on those that war for a placket. I have said my prayers; and devil Envy say amen. What, ho! my Lord Achilles! 20

*Enter PATROCLUS*

PATR. Who's there? Thersites! Good Thersites, come in and rail.

THER. If I could ha' remembered a gilt counterfeit, thou wouldst not have slipped out of my contemplation:

7 *engineer*] The Elizabethan spelling of "engineer," a constructor of military works.

11-12 *caduceus*] The wand of Mercury or Hermes, round which two serpents were usually represented as entwining. Martial (Bk. VII, Epigram 74) writes of Mercury "*Aurea cui torto virga dracone viret.*"

14 *in circumvention*] by dint of cunning.

15-16 *massy irons*] heavy swords.

17 *the Neapolitan bone-ache*] a name of venereal disease.

19 *a placket*] a petticoat.

23-24 *counterfeit . . . slipped out*] a punning phrase. A piece of bad money was variously called a "counterfeit" and a "slip." Cf. *Rom. & Jul.*, II, iv, 45-48.

but it is no matter; thyself upon thyself! The common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance, be thine in great revenue! heaven bless thee from a tutor, and discipline come not near thee! Let thy blood be thy direction till thy death! then if she that lays thee out says thou art a fair corse, I 'll be sworn and sworn upon't she never shrouded any but lazars. Amen. Where 's Achilles? 31

PATR. What, art thou devout? wast thou in prayer?

THER. Ay; the heavens hear me!

PATR. Amen.

*Enter ACHILLES*

ACHIL. Who 's there?

PATR. Thersites, my lord.

ACHIL. Where, where? Art thou come? why, my cheese, my digestion, why hast thou not served thyself in to my table so many meals? Come, what 's Agamemnon? 40

THER. Thy commander, Achilles: then tell me, Patroclus, what 's Achilles?

PATR. Thy lord, Thersites: then tell me, I pray thee, what 's thyself?

THER. Thy knower, Patroclus: then tell me, Patroclus, what art thou?

PATR. Thou mayst tell that knowest.

ACHIL. O, tell, tell.

THER. I 'll decline the whole question. Agamemnon

28 *Let thy blood be thy direction*] Let thy passions be thy guide.

49 *decline*] repeat in detail; "decline" is used in the grammatical sense of going through the moods and tenses of verbs or cases of nouns

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

commands Achilles; Achilles is my lord; I am Patroclus' knower, and Patroclus is a fool. 51

PATR. You rascal!

THER. Peace, fool! I have not done.

ACHIL. He is a privileged man. Proceed, Thersites.

THER. Agamemnon is a fool; Achilles is a fool; Thersites is a fool, and, as aforesaid, Patroclus is a fool.

ACHIL. Derive this; come.

THER. Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles; Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon; Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool; and Patroclus is a fool positive. 61

PATR. Why am I a fool?

THER. Make that demand of the prover. It suffices me thou art. Look you, who comes here?

ACHIL. Patroclus, I'll speak with nobody. Come in with me, Thersites. [Exit.

THER. Here is such patchery, such juggling and such knavery! all the argument is a cuckold and a whore; a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon. Now, the dry serpigo on the subject! and war and lechery confound all! [Exit. 71

---

52-56 *You rascal! . . . Patroclus is a fool*] Thus the Folios. The passage is omitted from the Quartos.

61 *positive*] the first degree of comparison; a technical term in grammar. Cf. line 49, *supra*.

63 *of the prover*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *to the Creator*.

67 *patchery*] cobbling, with a suggestion of deceitfulness.

70 *dry serpigo*] a repulsive disease marked by a dry eruption on the skin.

*Enter* AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and AJAX

AGAM. Where is Achilles?

PATR. Within his tent; but ill-disposed, my lord.

AGAM. Let it be known to him that we are here.  
 He shent our messengers; and we lay by  
 Our appertainments, visiting of him:  
 Let him be told so, lest perchance he think  
 We dare not move the question of our place,  
 Or know not what we are.

PATR. I shall say so to him. [*Exit.*]

ULYSS. We saw him at the opening of his tent: 80  
 He is not sick.

AJAX. Yes, lion-sick, sick of proud heart: you may  
 call it melancholy, if you will favour the man; but, by  
 my head, 't is pride: but why, why? let him show us the  
 cause. A word, my lord. [*Takes Agamemnon aside.*]

NEST. What moves Ajax thus to bay at him?

ULYSS. Achilles hath inveigled his fool from him.

NEST. Who, Thersites?

ULYSS. He. 89

NEST. Then will Ajax lack matter, if he have lost his  
 argument.

ULYSS. No, you see, he is his argument that has his  
 argument, Achilles.

NEST. All the better; their fraction is more our wish

---

75 *shent*] rebuked or abused; an archaism common in Elizabethan poetry.

*Shent* is Theobald's correction of the Quarto *sate* and the Folio *sent*.

75-76 *lay by Our appertainments*] divested ourselves of our dignity.

91-93 *argument . . . argument . . . argument*] theme of talk.

94-95 *fraction . . . faction*] disunion . . . union.

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

than their faction: but it was a strong composure a fool could disunite.

ULYSS. The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie.

*Re-enter PATROCLUS*

Here comes Patroclus.

NEST. No Achilles with him. 100

ULYSS. The elephant hath joints, but none for courtesy: his legs are legs for necessity, not for flexure.

PATR. Achilles bids me say, he is much sorry, If anything more than your sport and pleasure Did move your greatness and this noble state To call upor him; he hopes it is no other But for your health and your digestion sake, An after-dinner's breath.

AGAM. Hear you, Patroclus:  
We are too well acquainted with these answers:  
But his evasion, wing'd thus swift with scorn, 110  
Cannot outfly our apprehensions.  
Much attribute he hath, and much the reason  
Why we ascribe it to him: yet all his virtues,

95 *composure*] combination.

101-102 *The elephant . . . flexure*] It was a common belief that elephants could not bend the joints of the leg.

105 *this noble state*] this train of nobles in attendance.

108 *An after-dinner's breath*] Exercise or recreation after dinner. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 170: "it is the *breathing time* of day with me."

111 *Cannot outfly our apprehensions*] Cannot escape our attention, cannot fail to be fully appreciated by us.

112 *Much attribute he hath*] Much (repute) is attributed to him.



Not virtuously on his own part beheld,  
 Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss,  
 Yea, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,  
 Are like to rot untasted. Go and tell him,  
 We come to speak with him; and you shall not sin,  
 If you do say we think him over-proud  
 And under-honest; in self-assumption greater 120  
 Than in the note of judgement; and worthier than  
    himself

Here tend the savage strangeness he puts on,  
 Disguise the holy strength of their command,  
 And underwrite in an observing kind  
 His humorous predominance; yea, watch  
 His pettish lunes, his ebbs, his flows, as if  
 The passage and whole carriage of this action  
 Rode on his tide. Go tell him this, and add,  
 That if he overhold his price so much,

---

114 *Not virtuously . . . beheld*] Not viewed by himself with befitting modesty.

121 *Than in the note of judgement*] Than the verdict of good judges allows.

121-126 *worthier than himself . . . pettish lunes*] The construction is elliptical, and the language obscure. Agamemnon bids Patroclus tell Achilles that men worthier than himself are watching indulgently the rude aloofness he assumes, are dissembling the unblemished strength of their command (or power), and with tolerant consideration suffer his capricious moods of arrogance. Indeed, they are watching his pettish freaks of madness, etc.

126 *pettish lunes*] Thus Hanmer. The Folios read *pettish lines*; the Quarto *course, and time*. "Lunes" is often found in the sense of freaks of madness, though *lines* has been well defended as meaning "caprices."

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

We 'll none of him, but let him, like an engine  
Not portable, lie under this report: 130

"Bring action hither, this cannot go to war:

A stirring dwarf we do allowance give

Before a sleeping giant:" tell him so.

PATR. I shall; and bring his answer presently. [*Exit.*

AGAM. In second voice we'll not be satisfied;

We come to speak with him. Ulysses, enter you.

[*Exit Ulysses.*

AJAX. What is he more than another?

AGAM. No more than what he thinks he is.

AJAX. Is he so much? Do you not think he thinks  
himself a better man than I am? 141

AGAM. No question.

AJAX. Will you subscribe his thought and say  
he is?

AGAM. No, noble Ajax; you are as strong, as valiant,  
as wise, no less noble, much more gentle and altogether  
more tractable.

AJAX. Why should a man be proud? How doth pride  
grow? I know not what pride is.

AGAM. Your mind is the clearer, Ajax, and your vir-  
tues the fairer. He that is proud eats up himself: pride  
is his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle;  
and whatever praises itself but in the deed, devours the  
deed in the praise.

---

133 *we do allowance give*] we reckon of worth.

136 *In second voice*] By the voice of a deputy.

152-153 *whatever praises . . . praise*] For this denunciation of self-  
praise cf. I, iii, 241-242, *supra*.

**TROILUS AND CRESSIDA      ACT II**

**AJAX.** I do hate a proud man, as I hate the engendering of toads.

NEST. [*Aside*] Yet he loves himself: is't not strange?

*Re-enter* ULYSSES

**ULYSS.** Achilles will not to the field to-morrow.

AGAM. What's his excuse?

ULYSS.                               He doth rely on none,  
But carries on the stream of his dispose,  
Without observance or respect of any,                               160  
In will peculiar and in self-admission.

AGAM. Why will he not, upon our fair request,  
Untent his person, and share the air with us?

ULYSS. Things small as nothing, for request's sake  
only

He makes important: possess'd he is with greatness,  
And speaks not to himself but with a pride  
That quarrels at self-breath: imagined worth  
Holds in his blood such swoln and hot discourse  
That 'twixt his mental and his active parts  
Kingdom'd Achilles in commotion rages  
And batters down himself: what should I say?

154-155 *the engendering*] the spawn.

159 *dispose*] disposition.

161 *In will peculiar . . . self-admission*] At his personal choice and arbitrary self-assertion.

167 *quarrels at self-breath*] quarrels with himself, with his own utterances.

168 *Holds . . . discourse*] Rouses in his blood such heated controversy.

169-171 'twixt . . . batters down himself] Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, II, i, 67-69:

"the state of *man*, *Like to a little kingdom*, suffers then The nature

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

He is so plaguy proud that the death-tokens of it  
Cry "No recovery."

AGAM. Let Ajax go to him.  
Dear lord, go you and greet him in his tent:  
'T is said he holds you well, and will be led  
At your request a little from himself.

ULYSS. O Agamemnon, let it not be so!  
We 'll consecrate the steps that Ajax makes  
When they go from Achilles. Shall the proud lord  
That bastes his arrogance with his own seam, 180  
And never suffers matter of the world  
Enter his thoughts, save such as do revolve  
And ruminate himself, shall he be worshipp'd  
Of that we hold an idol more than he?  
No, this thrice worthy and right valiant lord  
Must not so stale his palm, nobly acquired,  
Nor, by my will, assubjugate his merit,  
As amply titled as Achilles is,  
By going to Achilles:  
That were to enlard his fat-already pride, 190  
And add more coals to Cancer when he burns

of an insurrection." "Kingdom'd" means after the manner of a kingdom (rent by civil strife).

172 *death-tokens*] small dark spots, which were reckoned fatal symptoms in sufferers from the plague. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, III, x, 9-10: "like the token'd pestilence Where death is sure."

180 *seam*] lard, fat. Cf. line 190, *infra*: "to enlard his fat-already pride."

182-183 *revolve And ruminate himself*] revolve about and ruminate upon himself.

184 *Of that we hold*] By the man whom we hold.

186 *stale*] cheapen.

190 *enlard . . . pride*] Cf. line 180, *supra*.

With entertaining great Hyperion.

This lord go to him! Jupiter forbid,

And say in thunder "Achilles go to him."

NEST. [*Aside*] O, this is well; he rubs the vein of him.

DIO. [*Aside*] And how his silence drinks up this applause!

AJAX. If I go to him, with my armed fist  
I'll pash him o'er the face.

AGAM. O, no, you shall not go.

AJAX. An a' be proud with me, I'll pheeze his pride:  
Let me go to him. 201

ULYSS. Not for the worth that hangs upon our quarrel.

AJAX. A paltry, insolent fellow!

NEST. [*Aside*] How he describes himself!

AJAX. Can he not be sociable?

ULYSS. [*Aside*] The raven chides blackness.

AJAX. I'll let his humours blood.

AGAM. [*Aside*] He will be the physician that should be  
the patient.

AJAX. An all men were o' my mind, — 210

192 *Hyperion*] the sun; cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 140, and *Hen. V.*, IV, i, 271.

198 *pash*] strike. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *push*. Cf. "pushed" *infra*, V, v, 10.

200 *pheeze*] whip, tease with a whip. Cf. *T. of Shrew, Induction*, I, i: "I'll pheeze you, i' faith."

202 *Not for . . . quarrel*] Not for the value of all that we are fighting for.

206 *The raven chides blackness*] A variant of the proverb, The kettle calls the pot black.

207 *let his humours blood*] cure by bleeding his morbid temper. A popular collection of epigrams by Samuel Rowlands, which went through four editions between 1600 and 1611 was called *The Letting of Humours Blood in the head-vaine*.

# SCENE III    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

ULYSS. [*Aside*] Wit would be out of fashion.

AJAX. A' should not bear it so, a' should eat swords first: shall pride carry it?

NEST. [*Aside*] Ar 't would, you 'ld carry half.

ULYSS. [*Aside*] A' would have ten shares.

AJAX. I will knead him, I'll make him supple.

NEST. [*Aside*] He 's not yet through warm: force him with praises: pour in, pour in; his ambition is dry.

ULYSS. [*To Agamemron*] My lord, you feed too much on this dislike.

NEST. Our noble general, do not do so. 220

DIO. You must prepare to fight without Achilles.

ULYSS. Why, 't is this naming of him does him harm. Here is a man — but 't is before his face; I will be silent.

NEST.            Wherefore should you so?  
He is not emulous, as Achilles is.

ULYSS. Know the whole world, he is as valiant.

AJAX. A whoreson dog, that shall palter thus with us! Would he were a Trojan!

NEST. What a vice were it in Ajax now —

ULYSS. If he were proud, — 230

DIO. Or covetous of praise, —

ULYSS. Ay, or surly borne, —

DIO. Or strange, or self-affected!

214 *ten shares*] ten times the amount.

217 *through warm*] thoroughly warm, warm all through.  
*force*] cram; like the French "farcir."

227 *palter*] equivocate, prevaricate. Cf. V, ii, 48, *infra*.

232 *surly borne*] disposed to surliness.

233 *Or strange, or self-affected*] Or distant or self-conceited.

ULYSS. Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet  
composure;

Praise him that got thee, she that gave thee suck:

Famed be thy tutor, and thy parts of nature

Thrice-famed beyond, beyond all erudition:

But he that disciplined thine arms to fight,

Let Mars divide eternity in twain,

And give him half: and, for thy vigour,

240

Bull-bearing Milo his addition yield

To sinewy Ajax. I will not praise thy wisdom,

Which, like a bourn, a pale, a shore, confines

Thy spacious and dilated parts: here 's Nestor,

Instructed by the antiquary times,

He must, he is, he cannot but be wise;

But pardon, father Nestor, were your days

As green as Ajax', and your brain so temper'd,

You should not have the eminence of him,

But be as Ajax.

AJAX.                Shall I call you father?

250

NEST. Ay, my good son.

DIO.                        Be ruled by him, Lord Ajax.

ULYSS. There is no tarrying here; the hart Achilles

Keeps thicket. Please it our great general

To call together all his state of war:

Fresh kings are come to Troy: to-morrow

We must with all our main of power stand fast:

241 *Milo*] A type of athletic strength in classical mythology. Cf. Ovid's  
*Metam.*, XV, 229, *seq.*

*his addition*] his title, reputation.

243 *born*] boundary.

SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

And here 's a lord, come knights from east to west,  
And cull their flower, Ajax shall cope the best.

AGAM. Go we to council. Let Achilles sleep:  
Light boats sail swift, though greater hulks draw  
deep. *[Exeunt.]*





ACT THIRD — SCENE I — TROY

A ROOM IN PRIAM'S PALACE

*Enter PANDARUS and a Servant*

PANDARUS



FRIEND, YOU, PRAY YOU,  
a word: do you not follow the  
young Lord Paris?

SERV. Ay, sir, when he goes  
before me.

PAN. You depend upon him,  
I mean?

SERV. Sir, I do depend upon  
the Lord.

PAN. You depend upon a  
noble gentleman; I must needs  
praise him.

SERV. The Lord be praised!

PAN. You know me, do you not?

SERV. Faith, sir, superficially.

PAN. Friend, know me better; I am the Lord Pan-  
darus.

10

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

SERV. I hope I shall know your honour better.

PAN. I do desire it.

SERV. You are in the state of grace.

PAN. Grace! not so, friend; honour and lordship are my titles. [*Music within*] What music is this?

SERV. I do but partly know, sir: it is music in parts.

PAN. Know you the musicians?

SERV. Wholly, sir.

PAN. Who play they to?

20

SERV. To the hearers, sir.

PAN. At whose pleasure, friend?

SERV. At mine, sir, and theirs that love music.

PAN. Command, I mean, friend.

SERV. Who shall I command, sir?

PAN. Friend, we understand not one another: I am too courtly, and thou art too cunning. At whose request do these men play?

SERV. That 's to 't, indeed, sir: marry, sir, at the request of Paris my lord, who is there in person; with him, the mortal Venus, the heart-blood of beauty, love's invisible soul.

32

PAN. Who, my cousin Cressida?

12-16 *I hope I shall know . . . are my titles*] There is quibbling here.

The servant first expresses a hope for Pandarus' spiritual betterment, and consolingly reflects that he is already in a state of grace, *i. e.*, in the way of salvation. Thereupon Pandarus deprecates any claim to be addressed by the clerical title of "Your grace."

17 *music in parts*] concerted music. Cf. line 47, *infra*: "broken music."  
29 to 't] to the point.

31-32 *love's invisible soul*] the soul of (the goddess of) love, which mortal eye cannot see.

SERV. No, sir, Helen: could not you find out that by her attributes?

PAN. It should seem, fellow, that thou hast not seen the Lady Cressida. I come to speak with Paris from the Prince Troilus: I will make a complimentary assault upon him, for my business seethes. 39

SERV. Sodden business! there's a stewed phrase indeed!

*Enter PARIS and HELEN, attended*

PAN. Fair be to you, my lord, and to all this fair company! fair desires, in all fair measure, fairly guide them! especially to you, fair queen! fair thoughts be your fair pillow!

HELEN. Dear lord, you are full of fair words.

PAN. You speak your fair pleasure, sweet queen. Fair prince, here is good broken music.

PAR. You have broke it, cousin: and, by my life, you shall make it whole again; you shall piece it out with a piece of your performance. Nell, he is full of harmony. 50

PAN. Truly, lady, no.

HELEN. O, sir, —

PAN. Rude, in sooth; in good sooth, very rude.

PAR. Well said, my lord! well, you say so in fits.

39 *seethes*] is at boiling point, is urgent.

40 *Sodden business . . . phrase*] an indelicate quibble on modes of curing venereal disease by means of sweating.

47 *broken music*] "music in parts," arranged for various instruments. Cf. line 17, *supra*.

54 *in fits*] capriciously, with a quibble on "fit" in the sense of a "stave" of a song.

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

PAN. I have business to my lord, dear queen. My lord, will you vouchsafe me a word?

HELEN. Nay, this shall not hedge us out: we 'll hear you sing, certainly

PAN. Well, sweet queen, you are pleasant with me. But, marry, thus, my lord: my dear lord, and most esteemed friend, your brother Troilus — 61

HELEN. My Lord Pandarus; holey-sweet lord, —

PAN. Go to, sweet queen, go to: — commends himself most affectionately to you —

HELEN. You shall not bob us out of our melody: if you do, our melancholy upon your head!

PAN. Sweet queen, sweet queen; that's a sweet queen, i' faith.

HELEN. And to make a sweet lady sad is a sour offence.

PAN. Nay, that shall not serve your turn; that shall it not, in truth, la. Nay, I care not for such words; no, no. And, my lord, he desires you, that if the king call for him at supper, you will make his excuse.

HELEN. My Lord Pandarus, — 74

PAN. What says my sweet queen, my very very sweet queen?

PAR. What exploit 's in hand? where sups he to-night?

HELEN. Nay, but, my lord, —

PAN. What says my sweet queen? My cousin will

---

57 *hedge us out*] bar us out, keep us from your song.

65 *bob us*] dodge us, trick us. Cf. II, i, 67, *supra*, and note.

fall out with you. You must not know where he  
sup.80

PAR. I'll lay my life, with my disposer Cressida.

PAN. No, no, no such matter; you are wide: come,  
your disposer is sick.

PAR. Well, I'll make excuse.

PAN. Ay, good my lord. Why should you say Cres-  
sida? no, your poor disposer's sick.

PAR. I spy.

PAN. You spy! what do you spy? Come, give me  
an instrument. Now, sweet queen.

HELEN. Why, this is kindly done.90

PAN. My niece is horribly in love with a thing you  
have, sweet queen.

HELEN. She shall have it, my lord, if it be not my  
lord Paris.

PAN. He! no, she'll none of him; they two are twain.

HELEN. Falling in, after falling out, may make them  
three.

PAN. Come, come, I'll hear no more of this; I'll sing  
you a song now.99

80 *You must not know . . . sups*] Hanmer rightly makes these words part  
of Pandarus' speech. The old editions give them to Helen.

81 *my disposer*] The expression has been explained as "she who has the  
disposal of me, she who can make me do anything." But "disposed"  
is often found (cf. *L. L. L.*, II, i, 249, V, ii, 466) in the sense of "dis-  
posed to more or less licentious merriment." Paris may be merely de-  
scribing Cressida as she who makes merriment for him.

87 *I spy*] the cry of children playing "hide and seek."

95 *twain*] at variance, at enmity.

96-97 *Falling in . . . three*] Lovers' reconciliation may lead to the  
begetting of a child.

# SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

HELEN. Ay, ay, prithee now. By my troth, sweet lord, thou hast a fine forehead.

PAN. Ay, you may, you may.

HELEN. Let thy song be love: this love will undo us all. O Cupid, Cupid, Cupid!

PAN. Love! ay, that it shall, i' faith.

PAR. Ay, good now, love, love, nothing but love.

PAN. In good troth, it begins so. [Sings.

Love, love, nothing but love, still more!

For, O, love's bow

Shoots buck and doe:

The shaft confounds,

Not that it wounds,

But tickles still the sore.

These lovers cry Oh! oh! they die:

Yet that which seems the wound to kill,

Doth turn oh! oh! to ha! ha! he!

So dying love lives still:

Oh! oh! a while, but ha! ha! ha!

Oh! oh! groans out for ha! ha! ha!

110

Heigh-ho!

120

HELEN. In love, i' faith, to the very tip of the nose.

PAR. He eats nothing but doves, love, and that breeds hot blood, and hot blood begets hot thoughts, and hot thoughts beget hot deeds, and hot deeds is love.

101 *a fine forehead*] a sign of manly beauty, here implying the possession of rare accomplishments.

102 *Ay, you may, you may*] A colloquialism for "you are pleased to jest at me." Cf. *Cor.*, II, iii, 34: "*you may, you may.*"

111-113 *The shaft confounds . . . tickles*] The shaft annoys, not because it wounds, but because it tickles.

115 *the wound to kill*] the mortal wound.

PAN. Is this the generation of love? hot blood, hot thoughts and hot deeds? Why, they are vipers: is love a generation of vipers? Sweet lord, who's afield to-day?

PAR. Hector, Deiphobus, Helenus, Antenor, and all the gallantry of Troy: I would fain have armed to-day, but my Nell would not have it so. How chance my brother Troilus went not? 131

HELEN. He hangs the lip at something: you know all, Lord Pandarus.

PAN. Not I, honey-sweet queen. I long to hear how they sped to-day. You'll remember your brother's excuse?

PAR. To a hair.

PAN. Farewell, sweet queen.

HELEN. Commend me to your niece.

PAN. I will, sweet queen. [Exit. 140]

[A retreat sounded.]

PAR. They're come from field: let us to Priam's hall, To greet the warriors. Sweet Helen, I must woo you To help unarm our Hector: his stubborn buckles, With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd, Shall more obey than to the edge of steel Or force of Greekish sinews; you shall do more Than all the island kings, — disarm great Hector.

126 *they are vipers*] Cf. Acts xxviii, 3: "there came a *viper* out of the heat."

127 *a generation of vipers*] Cf. Matthew iii, 7: "O *generation of vipers*."

132 *hangs the lip*] a sign of annoyance.

145 *more obey*] yield more easily.

147 *the island kings*] the kings from the islands of Greece.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

HELEN. 'T will make us proud to be his servant,  
Paris;  
Yea, what he shall receive of us in duty  
Gives us more palm in beauty than we have, 150  
Yea, overshines ourself.  
PAR. Sweet, above thought I love thee. [Exeunt.]

### SCENE II—AN ORCHARD TO PANDARUS' HOUSE

*Enter PANDARUS and TROILUS' Boy, meeting*

PAN. How now! where's thy master? at my cousin  
Cressida's?

BOY. No, sir; he stays for you to conduct him thither.

PAN. O, here he comes.

*Enter TROILUS*

How now, how now!

TRO. Sirrah, walk off. [Exit Boy.]

PAN. Have you seen my cousin?

TRO. No, Pandarus: I stalk about her door,  
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks  
Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon, 10  
And give me swift transportance to those fields  
Where I may wallow in the lily-beds

---

150 *more palm*] more glory or triumph.

8-10 *I stalk . . . Charon*] Cf. *Rich. III*, I, iv, 44-6: "my soul, Who  
pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood, With that grim ferryman  
which poets write of."



Proposed for the deserver! O gentle Pandarus,  
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings,  
And fly with me to Cressid!

PAN. Walk here i' the orchard, I'll bring her straight.  
[Exit.

TRO. I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.  
The imaginary relish is so sweet  
That it enchants my sense: what will it be,  
When that the watery palates taste indeed 20  
Love's thrice repured nectar? death, I fear me,  
Swounding destruction, or some joy too fine,  
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,  
For the capacity of my ruder powers:  
I fear it much, and I do fear besides  
That I shall lose distinction in my joys,  
As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps  
The enemy flying.

*Re-enter PANDARUS*

PAN. She 's making her ready, she 'll come straight:  
you must be witty now. She does so blush, and fetches  
her wind so short, as if she were frayed with a sprite:

16 *the orchard*] the garden; a common usage.

20 *watery palates*] the palates which water for, or strongly crave, fulfilment of desire.

21 *thrice repured*] thrice refined. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *thrice reputed*.

22 *Swounding*] a common form of *swooning*.

26 *distinction in my joys*] discrimination of my joys.

27 *a battle . . . heaps*] men of a battalion when they charge *en masse*.

31 *frayed with a sprite*] frightened by a ghost.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

I'll fetch her. It is the prettiest villain: she fetches her breath as short as a new-ta'en sparrow. *[Exit.*

TRO. Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom:  
My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse; 35  
And all my powers do their bestowing lose,  
Like assalage at unawares encountering  
The eye of majesty

*Re-enter PANDARUS with CRESSIDA*

PAN. Come, come, what need you blush? shame's a baby. Here she is now: swear the oaths now to her that you have sworn to me. What, are you gone again? you must be watched ere you be made tame, must you? Come your ways, come your ways; an you draw backward, we'll put you i' the fills. Why do you not speak to her? Come, draw this curtain, and let's see your picture. Alas the day, how loath you are to offend daylight! an't were dark, you'd close sooner. So, so; rub on, and kiss the mistress. How now! a kiss in

35 *thicker*] faster, more tempestuously.

36 *their bestowing*] their control, their use.

42 *watched . . . tame*] hawks were tamed by being watched, *i. e.*, kept from sleep. Cf. *Othello*, III, iii, 23: "I'll watch him tame."

44 *i' the fills*] in the shafts.

48 *rub on . . . mistress*] terms in bowls. "Rub" means to come into contact with some obstacle. It is not infrequently a preliminary to "hitting the jack," an achievement colloquially termed "kissing the mistress."

48-49 *a kiss in fee-farm . . . sweet*] "Fee-farm" meant full ownership. Pandarus means that Troilus has full right to kiss; the land — the sweet environment — is his own, to build on as he pleases.

fee-farm ! build there, carpenter ; the air is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere I part you. The falcon as the tercel, for all the ducks i' the river : go to, go to.

52

TRO. You have bereft me of all words, lady.

PAN. Words pay no debts, give her deeds : but she'll bereave you o' the deeds too, if she call your activity in question. What, billing again ? Here's "In witness whereof the parties interchangeably" — Come in, come in : I'll go get a fire. [Exit.

CRES. Will you walk in, my lord ?

59

TRO. O Cressida, how often have I wished me thus !

CRES. Wished, my lord ? — The gods grant — O my lord !

TRO. What should they grant ? what makes this pretty abruption ? What too curious dreg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of our love ?

CRES. More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.

TRO. Fears make devils of cherubins ; they never see truly.

CRES. Blind fear, that seeing reason leads, finds safer footing than blind reason stumbling without fear : to fear the worst oft cures the worse.

70

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51 *The falcon as the tercel*] Pandarus confidently wagers that the falcon, the male hawk, will prove a match for the tercel, the female hawk.

56 *billing*] a quibble. The word is used of birds joining bills as a mode of courtship ; but here suggests signing bills or legal deeds.

57 "*In witness . . . interchangeably*"] The formal declaration usually concluding covenants, to which both parties put their seal.

63 *abruption*] abrupt break.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

TRO. O, let my lady apprehend no fear: in all Cupid's pageant there is presented no monster.

CRES. Nor nothing monstrous neither?

TRO. Nothing, but our undertakings; when we vow to weep seas, live in fire, eat rocks, tame tigers; thinking it harder for our mistress to devise imposition enough than for us to undergo any difficulty imposed. This is the monstrosity in love, lady, that the will is infinite and the execution confined, that the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit.

80

CRES. They say, all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform, vowing more than the perfection of ten, and discharging less than the tenth part of one. They that have the voice of lions and the act of hares, are they not monsters?

TRO. Are there such? such are not we: praise us as we are tasted, allow us as we prove; our head shall go bare till merit crown it: no perfection in reversion shall have a praise in present: we will not name desert before his birth, and, being born, his addition shall be humble. Few words to fair faith: Troilus shall be such to Cressid as what envy can say worst shall be a mock for his truth, and what truth can speak truest, not truer than Troilus.

95

CRES. Will you walk in, my lord?

77 *undergo any difficulty*] undertake any difficult task.

88 *allow us as we prove*] approve or commend us as we stand the test.

91 *his addition . . . humble*] we will give it (*i. e.*, merit) no pompous titles.

93-94 *what envy . . . truth*] the worst that malice can do is to ridicule him for his constancy.

*Re-enter PANDARUS*

PAN. What, blushing still? have you not done talking yet?

CRES. Well, uncle, what folly I commit, I dedicate to you. 100

PAN. I thank you for that: if my lord get a boy of you, you'll give him me. Be true to my lord: if he flinch, chide me for it.

TRO. You know now your hostages; your uncle's word and my firm faith.

PAN. Nay, I'll give my word for her too: our kindred, though they be long ere they are wooed, they are constant being won: they are burs, I can tell you; they'll stick where they are thrown.

CRES. Boldness comes to me now, and brings me heart. 110

Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day  
For many weary months.

TRO. Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

CRES. Hard to seem won: but I was won, my lord,  
With the first glance that ever — pardon me;  
If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.  
I love you now; but not, till now, so much  
But I might master it: in faith, I lie;  
My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown  
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools! 120  
Why have I blabb'd? who shall be true to us,

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108–109 *they are burs . . . thrown*] Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, IV, iii, 173: "I am a kind of burr; I shall stick."

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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When we are so unsecret to ourselves?  
 But, though I loved you well, I woo'd you not;  
 And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,  
 Or that we women had men's privilege  
 Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue;  
 For in this rapture I shall surely speak  
 The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,  
 Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws  
 My very soul of counsel' Stop my mouth.

130

TRO. And shall, albeit sweet music issues thence.

PAN. Pretty, i' faith.

CRES. My lord, I do beseech you, pardon me;  
 'T was not my purpose thus to beg a kiss:  
 I am ashamed; O heavens! what have I done?  
 For this time will I take my leave, my lord.

TRO. Your leave, sweet Cressid?

PAN. Leave! an you take leave till to-morrow  
 morning —

CRES. Pray you, content you.

TRO. What offends you, lady?

140

CRES. Sir, mine own company.

TRO. You cannot shun yourself.

CRES. Let me go and try:  
 I have a kind of self resides with you,  
 But an unkind self that itself will leave  
 To be another's fool. I would be gone:  
 Where is my wit? I know not what I speak.

---

129 *Cunning*] Pope's correction of the old reading *Comming*.

130 *My very soul of counsel*] The very essence of my secret thought.

144 *I have . . . with you*] Cf. *Sonnet cxxxiii*, 13-14: "for I, being pent  
 in thee, Perforce am thine, and all that is in me."

TRO. Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely.

CRES. Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love,

And fell so roundly to a large confession 150

To angle for your thoughts: but you are wise;

Or else you love not, for to be wise and love

Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above.

TRO. O that I thought it could be in a woman —

As, if it can, I will presume in you —

To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;

To keep her constancy in plight and youth,

Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind

That doth renew swifter than blood decays!

Or that persuasion could but thus convince me, 160

That my integrity and truth to you

Might be affronted with the match and weight

Of such a winnowed purity in love;

How were I then uplifted! but, alas!

I am as true as truth's simplicity,

And simpler than the infancy of truth.

CRES. In that I'll war with you.

150 *roundly*] openly, without reserve.

151-153 *you are wise . . . gods above*] apparently a paraphrase of the Latin maxim, "Amare et sapere vix deo conceditur." ("To love and be wise is a capacity hardly allotted to a god.") "Or else" had the unusual force here of "And if it be so." For "Or else you love not," Cressida means "That is to say you are not in love."

157 *in plight*] in good condition.

162-163 *Might be affronted . . . purity in love*] Might be confronted or matched with an equal force of such sifted purity of love.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

TRO. O virtuous fight,  
 When right with right wars who shall be most right!  
 True swains in love shall in the world to come  
 Approve their truths by Troilus: when their rhymes,  
 Full of protest, of oath and big compare, 171  
 Want similes, truth tired with iteration,  
 "As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,  
 As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,  
 As iron to adamant, as earth to the centre,"  
 Yet, after all comparisons of truth,  
 As truth's authentic author to be cited,  
 "As true as Troilus" shall crown up the verse  
 And sanctify the numbers.

CRES. Prophet may you be!  
 If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth, 180  
 When time is old and hath forgot itself,  
 When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,  
 And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,  
 And mighty states characterless are grated  
 To dusty nothing, yet let memory,  
 From false to false, among false maids in love,

173 *as plantage to the moon*] as the vegetable world is dependent on the moon's influence. Plants were supposed to wax and wane with the waxing and waning of the moon.

175 *adamant*] the loadstone or magnet.  
*as earth to the centre*] The earth filled the central place in the solar system, according to the old astronomy. Cf. I, iii, 85, *supra*, and note.

177-178 *As truth's . . . verse*] Troilus means that the proverb "As true as Troilus" shall complete or round off the poetic protestation, and shall be cited as the word of an author of irrefutable truth.

184 *characterless*] without leaving records or traces.



Upbraid my falsehood! when they've said "as false  
 As air, as water, wind, or sandy earth,  
 As fox to lamb, or wolf to heifer's calf,  
 Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son," 190  
 "Yea," let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,  
 "As false as Cressid."

PAN. Go to, a bargain made: seal it, seal it; I'll be  
 the witness. Here I hold your hand; here my cousin's.  
 If ever you prove false one to another, since I have  
 taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful  
 goers-between be called to the world's end after my  
 name; call them all Pandars; let all constant men be  
 Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers-  
 between Pandars! Say "amen." 200

TRO. Amen.

CRES. Amen.

PAN. Amen. Whereupon I will show you a chamber  
 with a bed; which bed, because it shall not speak of  
 your pretty encounters, press it to death: away!

[*Exeunt Tro. and Cres.*]

And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here  
 Bed, chamber, Pandar to provide this gear! [Exit.]

190 *stepdame to her son*] A stepmother was traditionally reckoned a cruel tyrant.

191 *stick*] stab, kill.

205 *press it to death*] a jesting reference to the cruel punishment of pressing to death accused persons who refused to plead. Cf. *Much Ado*, III, i, 76, and note.

## SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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### SCENE III — THE GRECIAN CAMP

*Flourish. Enter* AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, NESTOR, AJAX,  
MELELAUS, and CALCHAS

CAL. Now, princes, for the service I have done you,  
The advantage of the time prompts me aloud  
To call for recompense. Appear it to your mind  
That, through the sight I bear in things to love,  
I have abandon'd Troy, left my possession,  
Incurr'd a traitor's name; exposed myself,  
From certain and possess'd conveniences,  
To doubtful fortunes; sequestering from me all  
That time, acquaintance, custom and condition  
Made tame and most familiar to my nature, 10  
And here, to do you service, am become  
As new into the world, strange, unacquainted:  
I do beseech you, as in way of taste,  
To give me now a little benefit,  
Out of those many register'd in promise,  
Which, you say, live to come in my behalf.

3 *Appear it* Make it manifest.

4 *through the sight . . . love*] a most difficult passage which can only mean, as it stands, in conflict with the context: "through the insight I possess as to what things deserve love or regard." If the comma after *love* be transferred to follow *things*, the meaning might be that Calchas through his insight has abandoned Troy to the dominion of love, to the consequences of Helen's amours with Paris. The sentence with this punctuation is hardly made plainer by substituting (with Johnson) *Jove* for *love*. The Fourth Folio reads *things to come* (i. e., futurity) for *things to love*. This is a reasonable simplification.

AGAM. What wouldst thou of us, Trojan? make demand.

CAL. You have a Trojan prisoner, call'd Antenor, Yesterday took: Troy holds him very dear. Oft have you — often have you thanks therefore — 20 Desired my Cressid in right great exchange, Whom Troy hath still denied: but this Antenor, I know, is such a wrest in their affairs, That their negotiations all must slack, Wanting his manage; and they will almost Give us a prince of blood, a son of Priam, In change of him: let him be sent, great princes, And he shall buy my daughter; and her presence Shall quite strike off all service I have done, In most accepted pain.

AGAM.                      Let Diomedes bear him, 30 And bring us Cressid hither: Calchas shall have What he requests of us. Good Diomed, Furnish you fairly for this interchange: Withal, bring word if Hector will to-morrow Be answer'd in his challenge: Ajax is ready.

DIO. This shall I undertake; and 't is a burthen Which I am proud to bear. [*Exeunt Diomedes and Calchas.*]

21 *in right great exchange*] by exchanging her for a prisoner of real eminence in your hands.

23 *a wrest*] literally the tuning key of a lute; here, a wise moderating influence. Cf. I, iii, 157, *supra*, "o'er-wrested."

30 *In most accepted pain*] In labour which I have cheerfully undertaken; "accepted" means "acceptable."

### SCENE III    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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*Enter* ACHILLES and PATROCLUS, *before their tent*

ULYSS. Achilles stands i' the entrance of his tent:  
Please it our general pass strangely by him,  
As if he were forgot; and, princes all, 40  
Lay negligent and loose regard upon him:  
I will come last. 'Tis like he'll question me  
Why such unplausive eyes are bent on him:  
If so, I have derision medicinal,  
To use between your strangeness and his pride,  
Which his own will shall have desire to drink.  
It may do good: pride hath no other glass  
To show itself but pride, for supple knees  
Feed arrogance and are the proud man's fees.

AGAM. We'll execute your purpose and put on 50  
A form of strangeness as we pass along;  
So do each lord, and either greet him not  
Or else disdainfully, which shall shake him more  
Than if not look'd on. I will lead the way.

ACHIL. What, comes the general to speak with me?  
You know my mind; I'll fight no more 'gainst Troy.

AGAM. What says Achilles? would he aught with us?

NEST. Would you, my lord, aught with the general?

ACHIL. No.

NEST. Nothing, my lord. 60

AGAM. The better. [Exeunt Agamemnon and Nestor.]

---

43 *Why such . . . on him*] The old editions add to the line the words *why turn'd on him*, obviously a gloss which has accidentally crept into the text; "unplausive" means "disapproving."

45 *strangeness*] distant attitude, bearing of aloofness.

ACHIL. Good day, good day.

MEN. How do you? how do you? [Exit

ACHIL. What, does the cuckold scorn me?

AJAX. How now, Patroclus!

ACHIL. Good morrow, Ajax.

AJAX. Ha?

ACHIL. Good morrow.

AJAX. Ay, and good next day too. [Exit.

ACHIL. What mean these fellows? Know they not  
Achilles? 70

PATR. They pass by strangely: they were used to  
bend,

To send their smiles before them to Achilles,

To come as humbly as they used to creep

To holy altars.

ACHIL. What, am I poor of late?

'T is certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,

Must fall out with men too: what the declined is,

He shall as soon read in the eyes of others

As feel in his own fall: for men, like butterflies,

Show not their mealy wings but to the summer;

And not a man, for being simply man, 80

Hath any honour, but honour for those honours

That are without him, as place, riches, and favour,

Prizes of accident as oft as merit:

Which when they fall, as being slippery standers,

The love that lean'd on them as slippery too,

---

**79** *mealy wings*] wings looking as if they were covered with meal-dust or flour. The butterfly is consequently called the "miller" in some provincial dialects.

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Do one pluck down another and together  
 Die in the fall. But 't is not so with me:  
 Fortune and I are friends: I do enjoy  
 At ample point all that I did possess,  
 Save these men's looks; who do, methinks, find out 90  
 Something not worth in me such rich beholding  
 As they have often given. Here is Ulysses:  
 I'll interrupt his reading.  
 How now, Ulysses:

ULYSS. Now, great Thetis' son!

ACHIL. What are you reading?

ULYSS. A strange fellow here  
 Writes me: "That man, how dearly ever parted,  
 How much in having, or without or in,  
 Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,  
 Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection;  
 As when his virtues shining upon others 100  
 Heat them, and they retort that heat again  
 To the first giver."

ACHIL. This is not strange, Ulysses.  
 The beauty that is borne here in the face  
 The bearer knows not, but commends itself  
 To others' eyes: nor doth the eye itself,  
 That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,  
 Not going from itself; but eye to eye opposed

89 *At ample point*] In ample measure.

96-97 *how dearly . . . or without or in*] however richly endowed, however much he have of external bodily gifts or internal mental ones.

105-106 *To others' . . . behold itself*] These lines are found only in the Quartos. They are omitted from the Folios.

106 *spirit of sense*] used of the hand, *supra*, I, i, 57.

Salutes each other with each other's form:  
 For speculation turns not to itself,  
 Till it hath travell'd and is mirror'd there 110  
 Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.

ULYSS. I do not strain at the position —  
 It is familiar — but at the author's drift;  
 Who in his circumstance expressly proves  
 That no man is the lord of any thing,  
 Though in and of him there be much consisting,  
 Till he communicate his parts to others;  
 Nor doth he of himself know them for aught,  
 Till he behold them formed in the applause  
 Where they're extended; who, like an arch, reverberates  
 The voice again; or, like a gate of steel 121  
 Fronting the sun, receives and renders back  
 His figure and his heat. I was much rapt in this;  
 And apprehended here immediately  
 The unknown Ajax.  
 Heavens, what a man is there! a very horse;  
 That has he knows not what. Nature, what things  
    there are,

---

109 *speculation*] power of vision.

110 *mirror'd*] Singer's emendation of the old reading *married* (*i. e.* closely joined, gathered together), which is less satisfactory.

114 *his circumstance*] the detail of his argument.

120 *who*] The antecedent would seem to be "applause" of line 119. "who" is used for "which."

125 *The unknown Ajax*] Ajax unknown, untried in competition with others.

125-133 *The unknown . . . to do*] The Folios arrange the lines here thus. The Quartos make line 127 (*Nature . . . are*) the short line of the passage.

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Most abject in regard and dear in use!  
 What things again most dear in the esteem  
 And poor in worth! Now shall we see to-morrow — 130  
 An act that very chance loth throw upon him —  
 Ajax renown'd. O heavens, what some men do,  
 While some men leave to do!  
 How some men creep in skittish fortune's hall,  
 Whiles others play the idiots in her eyes!  
 How one man eats into another's pride,  
 While pride is fasting in his wantonness!  
 To see these Grecian lords! Why, even already  
 They clap the lubber Ajax on the shoulder,  
 As if his foot were on brave Hector's breast 140  
 And great Troy shrieking.

ACHIL. I do believe it; for they pass'd by me  
 As misers do by beggars, neither gave to me  
 Good word nor look: what, are my deeds forgot?

ULYSS. Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back  
 Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,

128 *Most abject . . . use*] Of most contemptible value, but excessively useful.

134-135 *some men creep . . . in her eyes*] Some are slow in attracting the protecting favours of fickle Fortune. Others, though perfect idiots, bask in the sunshine of her eyes.

137 *While pride . . . wantonness*] While pride is capriciously abstaining from the active exertion (which might lend it sustenance). For the Quarto reading *fasting*, the Folios awkwardly substitute *feasting*.

139 *clap . . . on the shoulder*] boisterously applaud.

141 *shrieking*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read, less vividly, *shrinking*.

145-150 *Time hath . . . As done*] In Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, VI, viii, 23 and 24, the lady Mirabell is said to carry a wallet at her back, wherein she puts "repentaunce for things past and gon."



A great-sized monster of ingrati-  
 tudes:  
 Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devour'd  
 As fast as they are made, forgot as soon  
 As done: perseverance, dear my lord, 150  
 Keeps honour bright: to have done, is to hang  
 Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail  
 In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;  
 For honour travels in a strait so narrow,  
 Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;  
 For emulation hath a thousand sons  
 That one by one pursue: if you give way,  
 Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,  
 Like to an enter'd tide they all rush by  
 And leave you hindmost: 160  
 Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,  
 Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,  
 O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,  
 Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;  
 For time is like a fashionable host  
 That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,  
 And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,  
 Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,

---

150 *perseverance*] The accent is on the second syllable. Shakespeare uses the word only here and in *Macb.*, IV, iii, 93.

152 *mail*] coat of armour; Pope's spelling of the original reading *male*.

160 *hindmost*] Thus the Folios. The Quarto reads, unintelligibly, *him, most, then*.

161-163 *Or, like . . . trampled on*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit these words.

162 *the abject rear*] Hanmer's correction of the meaningless Folio reading *abject, neere* (or *near*).

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek  
 Remuneration for the thing it was; 170  
 For beauty, wit,  
 High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,  
 Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all  
 To envious and calumniating time.  
 One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;  
 That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,  
 Though they are made and moulded of things past,  
 And give to dust that is a little gilt  
 More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.  
 The present eye praises the present object: 180  
 Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,  
 That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;  
 Since things in motion sooner catch the eye  
 Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee,  
 And still it might, and yet it may again,  
 If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive  
 And case thy reputation in thy tent,  
 Whose glorious deeds, but in these field of late,  
 Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselves,  
 And drave great Mars to faction.

---

175 *One touch of nature . . . kin*] In this oft-quoted line "touch" is used in the ordinary sense of spark, or smack. Cf. IV, ii, 96, *infra*: "touch of consanguinity," and *Mach.*, IV, ii, 9: "He wants the natural touch." It is unsatisfactory to interpret "touch" as "defect," *i. e.*, the defect of running after what is new.

176 *gawds*] toys, trifles.

179 *gilt o'er-dusted*] gold covered with dust (of antiquity).

189 *Made emulous missions . . . themselves*] Excited jealousies among the gods, which led to their intervention. "Missions," doubtless means

**TROILUS AND CRESSIDA     ACT III**

ACHIL.                               Of this my privacy     190  
I have strong reasons.

ULYSS. But 'gainst your privacy  
 The reasons are more potent and heroical:  
 'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love  
 With one of Priam's daughters.

ACHIL. Ha! known?

ULYSS. Is that a wonder?  
 The providence that's in a watchful state  
 Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold,  
 Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps,  
 Keeps place with thought, and almost like the gods  
 Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.

There is a mystery, with whom relation  
 Durst never meddle, in the soul of state;  
 Which hath an operation more divine  
 Than breath or pen can give expressure to:  
 All the commerce that you have had with Troy  
 As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord;

diplomatic negotiations or despatches. Some modern editors read *scissions* or *divisions*.

194 one of Priam's daughters] Polyxena (see line 208, *infra*), who was betrothed to Achilles. At the ceremony of the wedding Achilles was slain by the bride's brother Paris.

196 *providence*] foresight.

197 every grain of *Plutus'* gold] The Quartos have merely *everything*. The Folios read *every graine of Plutoes gold*. A similar confusion of *Plutus* and *Pluto* occurs in the Folio text of *Jul. Cæs.*, IV, iii, 102: "dearer than *Pluto's* (for *Plutus's*) mine."

198 *uncomprehensive*] incomprehensible, mysterious.

200 *cradles*] The word must be pronounced trisyllabically.

201 *relation*] narration, report.

### SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

And better would it fit Achilles much  
 To throw down Hector than Polyxena:  
 But it must grieve young Pyrrhus now at home,  
 When fame shall in our islands sound her trump; 210  
 And all the Greèkish girls shall tripping sing  
 "Great Hector's sister did Achilles win,  
 But our great Ajax bravely beat down him."  
 Farewell, my lord: I as your lover speak;  
 The fool slides o'er the ice that you should break. [*Exit.*]

PATR. To this effect, Achilles, have I moved you:  
 A woman impudent and mannish grown  
 Is not more loathed than an effeminate man  
 In time of action. I stand condemn'd for this;  
 They think my little stomach to the war 220  
 And your great love to me restrains you thus:  
 Sweet, rouse yourself, and the weak wanton Cupid  
 Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,  
 And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,  
 Be shook to air.

ACHIL. Shall Ajax fight with Hector?

PATR. Ay, and perhaps receive much honour by him.

ACHIL. I see my reputation is at stake;  
 My fame is shrewdly gored.

PATR. O, then, beware;  
 Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves:  
 Omission to do what is necessary 230

---

209 *Pyrrhus*] Achilles' son, by Deidameia, a princess of Scyros. After his father's death he was summoned to the Trojan war and took a prominent part in the final episode of the siege of Troy. See note on IV, v, 142, *infra*.

Seals a commission to a blank of danger;  
And danger, like an ague, subtly taints  
Even then when we sit idly in the sun.

ACHIL. Go call Thersites hither, sweet Patroclus:  
I'll send the fool to Ajax, and desire him  
To invite the Trojan lords after the combat  
To see us here unarm'd: I have a woman's longing,  
An appetite that I am sick withal,  
To see great Hector in his weeds of peace;  
To talk with him, and to behold his visage,      240  
Even to my full of view. — A labour saved!

*Enter THERSITES*

THER. A wonder!

ACHIL. What?

THER. Ajax goes up and down the field, asking for himself.

ACHIL. How so?

THER. He must fight singly to-morrow with Hector, and is so prophetically proud of an heroical cudgelling that he raves in saying nothing.

ACHIL. How can that be?      250

THER. Why, a' stalks up and down like a peacock, — a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning: bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say

231 *Seals a commission . . . danger*] Gives danger a blank charter duly sealed. Danger may fill up the blank instrument with any demands it pleases to insert.

241 *to my full of view*] till my vision is completely satisfied.

254 *a politic regard*] a cunning look.

### SCENE III    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

"There were wit in this head, an 't would out:" and so there is; but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking. The man's undone for ever; for if Hector break not his neck i' the combat, he'll break 't himself in vain-glory. He knows not me: I said "Good morrow, Ajax;" and he replies "Thanks, Agamemnon." What think you of this man, that takes me for the general? He's grown a very land-fish, languageless, a monster. A plague of opinion! a man may wear it on both sides, like a leather jerkin. 264

ACHIL. Thou must be my ambassador to him, Thersites.

THER. Who, I? why, he'll answer nobody; he professes not answering: speaking is for beggars; he wears his tongue in's arms. I will put on his presence: let Patroclus make demands to me, you shall see the pageant of Ajax. 269

ACHIL. To him, Patroclus: tell him I humbly desire the valiant Ajax to invite the most valorous Hector to come unarmed to my tent, and to procure safe-conduct for his person of the magnanimous and most illustrious six-or-seven-times-honoured captain-general of the Grecian army, Agamemnon, et cetera. Do this.

PATR. Jove bless great Ajax!

THER. Hum!

PATR. I come from the worthy Achilles, —

THER. Ha! 279

262-263 *He's grown . . . a monster*] Apparently a premonition of the conception of Caliban in *The Tempest*.

263 *A plague of opinion!*] A plague on self-conceit (which Thersites judges to be capable of anything).

PATR. Who most humbly desires you to invite Hector to his tent, —

THER. Hum!

PATR. And to procure safe-conduct from Agamemnon.

THER. Agamemnon?

PATR. Ay, my lord.

THER. Ha!

PATR. What say you to't?

THER. God be wi' you, with all my heart.

PATR. Your answer, sir.

289

THER. If to-morrow be a fair day, by eleven of the clock it will go one way or other: howsoever, he shall pay for me ere he has me.

PATR. Your answer, sir.

THER. Fare you well, with all my heart.

ACHIL. Why, but he is not in this tune, is he?

THER. No, but he's out o' tune thus. What music will be in him when Hector has knocked out his brains, I know not; but, I am sure, none, unless the fiddler Apollo get his sinews to make catlings on.

299

ACHIL. Come, thou shalt bear a letter to him straight.

THER. Let me bear another to his horse; for that's the more capable creature.

ACHIL. My mind is troubled like a fountain stirr'd, And I myself see not the bottom of it.

*[Exeunt Achilles and Patroclus.]*

THER. Would the fountain of your mind were clear again, that I might water an ass at it! I had rather be a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance. *[Exit.]*

299 *catlings*] strings of catgut for the lyre.

302 *capable*] intelligent.

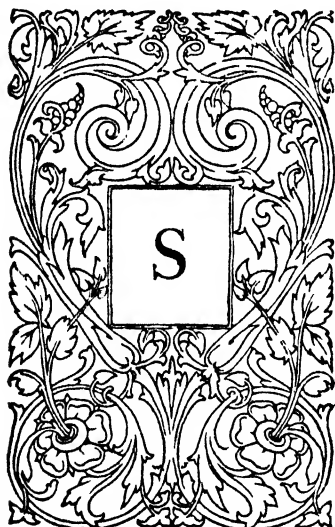


## ACT FOURTH—SCENE I--TROY

### A STREET

*Enter, at one side, ÆNEAS, and Servant with a torch; at the other, PARIS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, DIOMEDES, and others, with torches*

PARIS



EE, HO! WHO IS THAT  
there?

DEI. It is the Lord Æneas.

ÆNE. Is the prince there in  
person?  
Had I so good occasion to lie  
long

As you, Prince Paris, nothing  
but heavenly business  
Should rob my bed-mate of my  
company.

DIO. That's my mind too.  
Good morrow, Lord Æneas.

PAR. A valiant Greek, Æneas, — take his hand, —  
Witness the process of your speech, wherein

9 *process*] tenour.



You told how Diomed a whole week by days      10  
Did haunt you in the field.

ÆNE. Health to you, valiant sir,  
During all question of the gentle truce;  
But when I meet you arm'd, as black defiance  
As heart can think or courage execute.

DIO. The one and other Diomed embraces.  
Our bloods are now in calm; and, so long, health;  
But when contention and occasion meet,  
By Jove, I'll play the hunter for thy life  
With all my force, pursuit and policy.      20

ÆNE. And thou shalt hunt a lion, that will fly  
With his face backward. In humane gentleness,  
Welcome to Troy! now, by Anchises' life,  
Welcome, indeed! By Venus' hand I swear,  
No man alive can love in such a sort  
The thing he means to kill more excellently.

DIO. We sympathise. Jove, let Æneas live,  
If to my sword his fate be not the glory,  
A thousand complete courses of the sun!  
But, in mine emulous honour, let him die,      30  
With every joint a wound, and that to-morrow.

ÆNE. We know each other well.

DIO. We do; and long to know each other worse.

PAR. This is the most despiteful gentle greeting,

---

10 *a whole week by days*] day after day for a whole week.

13 *During all question . . . truce*] While friendly intercourse lasts in accordance with the terms of the truce.

23-24 *Anchises' . . . Venus'*] respectively the father and mother of Æneas.

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of.

What business, lord, so early?

ÆNE. I was sent for to the king; but why, I know not.

PAR. His purpose meets you: 't was to bring this Greek

To Calchas' house; and there to render him,

For the enfrised Artenor, the fair Cressid:

40

Let's have your company, or, if you please,

Haste there before us. I constantly do think,

Or rather, call my thought a certain knowledge,

My brother Troilus lodges there to-night:

Rouse him and give him note of our approach,

With the whole quality wherefore: I fear

We shall be much unwelcome.

ÆNE. That I assure you:

Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece

Than Cressid borne from Troy.

PAR. There is no help;

The bitter disposition of the time

50

Will have it so. On, lord; we'll follow you.

ÆNE. Good morrow, all. *[Exit with Servant.]*

PAR. And tell me, noble Diomed, faith, tell me true,

Even in the soul of sound good-fellowship,

Who, in your thoughts, deserves fair Helen best,

Myself or Menelaus?

---

35 *hateful*] full of hate.

38 *His purpose meets you*] I as his messenger bring you his meaning.

42 *I constantly do think*] I am firmly convinced.

50 *bitter disposition*] desperate circumstances.

DIO.                              Both alike:

He merits well to have her that doth seek her,  
 Not making any scruple of her soilure,  
 With such a hell of pain and world of charge;  
 And you as well to keep her, that defend her,      60  
 Not palating the taste of her dishonour,  
 With such a costly loss of wealth and friends:  
 He, like a puling cuckold, would drink up  
 The lees and dregs of a flat tamed piece;  
 You, like a lecher, out of whorish loins  
 Are pleased to breed out your inheritors:  
 Both merits poised, each weighs nor less nor more,  
 But he as he, the heavier for a whore.

PAR. You are too bitter to your countrywoman.

DIO. She 's bitter to her country: hear me, Paris:      70  
 For every false drop in her bawdy veins  
 A Grecian's life hath sunk; for every scruple  
 Of her contaminated carrion weight,  
 A Trojan hath been slain: since she could speak,  
 She hath not given so many good words breath  
 As for her Greeks and Trojans suffer'd death.

PAR. Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,  
 Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy:

---

64 *a flat tamed piece*] a creature resembling wine from which the spirit or goodness has fled. "Piece" is used both for a cask of wine and for a woman of no account, a hussy.

67-68 *Both merits . . . for a whore*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *which heavier for the heavier*. Johnson substituted *each* for *which*. The meaning is that the merits of each, weighed one against the other, are equal. Each of the scales in which their merits are weighed is discounted by the burden of a harlot.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

But we in silence hold this virtue well,  
We 'll not commend what we intend to sell.  
Here lies our way.

80

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE II—COURT OF PANDARUS' HOUSE

*Enter TROILUS and CRESSIDA*

TRO. Dear, trouble not yourself: the morn is cold.

CRES. Then, sweet my lord, I 'll call mine uncle down;  
He shall unbolt the gates.

TRO. Trouble him not;  
To bed, to bed: sleep kill those pretty eyes,  
And give as soft attachment to thy senses  
As infants' empty of all thought!

CRES. Good morrow, then.

TRO. I prithee now, to bed.

CRES. Are you a-weary of me?

TRO. O Cressida! but that the busy day,  
Waked by the lark, hath roused the ribald crows,  
And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer,  
I would not from thee.

10

CRES. Night hath been too brief.

---

80 *We 'll not commend . . . sell*] Thus the old editions. Paris deprecates Diomedes's vulgar depreciations of Helen with the assurance that the Trojans will not puff their wares like petty traders. Their value speaks for itself. Helen is not to be bartered in the petty ways of trade.

5-6 *give as soft attachment to . . . As infants*] as gently arrest or seize upon thy senses as those of infants. "Attach" and "attachment" commonly had the significance of "arrest."



## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

hast not slept to-night? would he not, a naughty man, let it sleep? a bugbear take him!

CRES. Did not I tell you? would he were knock'd i'  
the head! [One knocks.]

Who's that at door? good uncle, go and see.

My lord, come you again into my chamber.

You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily.

TRO. Ha, ha!

CRES. Come, you are deceived, I think of no such  
thing. [Knocking.]

How earnestly they knock! Pray you, come in: 40

I would not for half Troy have you seen here.

[Exeunt Troilus and Cressida.]

PAN. Who's there? what's the matter? will you beat  
down the door? How now! what's the matter?

*Enter ÆNEAS*

ÆNE. Good morrow, lord, good morrow.

PAN. Who's there? my Lord Æneas! By my troth,  
I knew you not: what news with you so early?

ÆNE. Is not prince Troilus here?

PAN. Here! what should he do here?

ÆNE. Come, he is here, my lord; do not deny him:  
It doth import him much to speak with me. 50

PAN. Is he here, say you? 't is more than I know, I'll  
be sworn: for my own part, I came in late. What  
should he do here?

ÆNE. Who! nay, then: come, come, you'll do him

---

Italian word for a simpleton ("a shallow skonce, a loggerhead"), but  
"Capocchia," which has a physiological meaning, is probably right.

wrong ere you are ware: you'll be so true to him, to be false to him: do not you know of him, but yet go fetch him hither; go.

*Re-enter TROILUS*

TRO. How now! what 's the matter?

ÆNE. My lord, I scarce have leisure to salute you,  
My matter is so rash: there is at hand 60  
Paris your brother and Deiphobus,  
The Grecian Diomed, and our Antenor  
Deliver'd to us; and for him forthwith,  
Ere the first sacrifice, within this hour,  
We must give up to Diomedes' hand  
The Lady Cressida.

TRO.                                      Is it so concluded?

ÆNE. By Priam and the general state of Troy.  
They are at hand and ready to effect it.

TRO. How my achievements mock me!  
I will go meet them: and, my Lord Æneas, 70  
We met by chance; you did not find me here.

ÆNE. Good, good, my lord; the secrets of nature  
Have not more gift in taciturnity.

*[Exeunt Troilus and Æneas.]*

55-56 *you 'll be so true . . . know of him]* in thinking to serve his interest,  
you are likely to do him harm; do not implicate yourself by admitting  
knowledge that he is here.

60 *rash]* urgent.

67 *the general state]* the general council.

71 *We met by chance . . . here]* Troilus bids Æneas conceal the facts.

72 *the secrets of nature]* the silent forces of nature. Thus the Folios. The  
Quartos read unsatisfactorily *the secrets of neighbor Pandar*. "Secrets"  
is pronounced trisyllabically.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

PAN. Is 't possible? no sooner got but lost? The devil take Antenor! the young prince will go mad: a plague upon Antenor! I would they had broke 's neck!

*Re-enter CRESSIDA*

CRES. How now! what 's the matter? who was here?

PAN. Ah, ah!

CRES. Why sigh you so profoundly? where's my lord? gone! Tell me, sweet uncle, what 's the matter? 80

PAN. Would I were as deep under the earth as I am above!

CRES. O the gods! What 's the matter?

PAN. Prithes, get thee in: would thou hadst ne'er been born! I knew thou wouldst be his death: O, poor gentleman! A plague upon Antenor!

CRES. Good uncle, I beseech you, on my knees I beseech you, what 's the matter?

PAN. Thou must be gone, wench, thou must be gone; thou art changed for Antenor: thou must to thy father, and be gone from Troilus: 't will be his death; 't will be his bane; he cannot bear it. 92

CRES. O you immortal gods! I will not go.

PAN. Thou must.

CRES. I will not, uncle: I have forgot my father; I know no touch of consanguinity;  
No kin, no love, no blood, no soul so near me  
As the sweet Troilus. O you gods divine!  
Make Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood,  
If ever she leave Troilus! Time, force, and death, 100

---

96 *touch*] smack. Cf. III, iii, 175, *supra*, and note.

99 *crown*] culminating point.



## ACT IV

PAN. Do, do.

CRES. Tear my bright hair and scratch my praised  
cheeks,  
Crack my clear voice with sobs, and break my heart  
With sounding Troilus. I will not go from Troy. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter* PARIS, TROILUS, ÆNEAS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR,  
and DIOMEDES

PAR. It is great morning, and the hour prefix'd  
For her delivery to this valiant Greek  
Comes fast upon: good my brother Troilus,  
Tell you the lady what she is to do,  
And haste her to the purpose.

TRO. Walk into her house;  
I'll bring her to the Grecian presently:  
And to his hand when I deliver her,  
Think it an altar, and thy brother Troilus  
A priest, there offering to it his own heart. [Exit.

PAR. I know what 't is to love; 10  
And would, as I shall pity, I could help!  
Please you walk in, my lords. [*Exeunt.*]

103-104 *the very centre . . . to it*] The theory of the earth's gravitation, though ultimately established by Newton, was current in the popular natural philosophy of Shakespeare's day.

**1 great morning]** broad daylight. Cf. *Cymb.*, IV, ii, 62.

## SCENE IV TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

### SCENE IV — A ROOM IN PANDARUS' HOUSE

*Enter PANDARUS and CRESSIDA*

PAN. Be moderate, be moderate.

CRES. Why tell you me of moderation?  
The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,  
And violenteth in a sense as strong  
As that which causeth it: how can I moderate it?  
If I could temporise with my affection,  
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,  
The like allayment could I give my grief:  
My love admits no qualifying dross;  
No more my grief, in such a precious loss. 10

*Enter TROILUS*

PAN. Here, here, here he comes. Ah, sweet ducks!

CRES. O Troilus! Troilus! [*Embracing him.*]

PAN. What a pair of spectacles is here! Let me embrace too. "O heart," as the goodly saying is,

"O heart, heavy heart,

Why sigh'st thou without breaking?"

where he answers again,

"Because thou canst not ease thy smart

By friendship nor by speaking." 19

---

4-5 *violenteth . . . causeth it*] rages with all the strength of the love that causes it. Thus the Quartos. The Folios confusedly substitute *no less* for *violenteth*.

14-19 "*O heart,*" as the goodly saying is . . . *by speaking*] clearly an old song; but its source has not been traced.

19 *By friendship nor by speaking*] neither by Platonic affection nor by mere words.

## ACT IV

There was never a truer rhyme. Let us cast away nothing, for we may live to have need of such a verse: we see it, we see it. How now, lambs!

TRO. Cressid, I love thee in so strain'd a purity,  
That the blest gods, as angry with my fancy,  
More bright in zeal than the devotion which  
Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me.

CRES. Have the gods envy?

PAN. Ay, ay, ay, ay; 't is too plain a case.

CRES. And it is true that I must go from Troy?

**TRO.** A hateful truth.

CRES.                   What, and from Troilus too? 30

**Tro.** From Troy and Troilus.

CRES. Is it possible?

Tro. And suddenly ; where injury of chance  
Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by  
All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips  
Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents  
Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows  
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath :  
We two, that with so many thousand sighs  
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves  
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.  
Injurious time now with a robber's haste  
Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how :  
As many farewells as be stars in heaven,

23 *strain'd*] refined, purified. Cf. IV, v, 169, *infra*. Thus the Quartos.

The Folios read *strange*.

24 *fancy*] love, passion.

35 *all rejoindure*] all meeting again.

**36 embrasures]** embraces.

## SCENE IV TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,  
He fumbles up into a loose adieu,  
And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,  
Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

ÆNE. [*Within*] My lord, is the lady ready?

TRO. Hark! you are call'd: some say the Genius so  
Cries "Come!" to him that instantly must die. 50  
Bid them have patience; she shall come anon.

PAN. Where are my tears? rain, to lay this wind, or  
my heart will be blown up by the root. [*Exit*].

CRES. I must then to the Grecians?

TRO. No remedy.

CRES. A woeful Cressid 'mongst the merry Greeks!  
When shall we see again?

TRO. Hear me, my love: be thou but true of heart.

CRES. I true! how now! what wicked deem is this?

TRO. Nay, we must use expostulation kindly,  
For it is parting from us: 60  
I speak not "be thou true," as fearing thee;  
For I will throw my glove to Death himself,  
That there's no maculation in thy heart:

44 *and consign'd kisses to them*] and in addition to them kisses that are seals of fidelity.

47 *Distasted . . . tears*] Made bitter to the taste by the salt of tears and sobs. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Distasting* for *Distasted*.

49-50 *the Genius*] the demon or spirit which is supposed to attend every human being through life. Cf. *Macb.*, III, i, 55: "My Genius is rebuked."

55 *the merry Greeks*] For the epithet cf. I, ii, 104, *supra*.

58 *deem*] surmise, suspicion.

62 *throw my glove*] give challenge.

63 *maculation*] blemish.

But "be thou true" say I, to fashion in  
My sequent protestation; be thou true,  
And I will see thee.

CRES. O, you shall be exposed, my lord, to dangers  
As infinite as imminent: but I'll be true.

TRO. And I'll grow friend with danger. Wear this  
sleeve.

CRES. And you this glove. When shall I see you? 70

TRO. I will corrupt the Grecian sentinels,  
To give thee nightly visitation.  
But yet, be true.

CRES. O heavens! "Be true" again!

TRO. Hear why I speak it, love:  
The Grecian youths are full of quality;  
They're loving, well composed with gifts of nature,  
And flowing o'er with arts and exercise:  
How novelties may move and parts with person,  
Alas, a kind of godly jealousy —  
Which, I beseech you, call a virtuous sin — 80  
Makes me afeard.

CRES. O heavens! you love me not.

TRO. Die I a villain then!

64-65 *to fashion in . . . protestation*] to harmonise or cohere with the protestation which follows.

69 *Wear this sleeve*] A lady's sleeve is very commonly mentioned as a token of a lady's favour worn by her lover or knightly champion. A cuff or band attached to the sleeve is probably meant.

75 *full of quality*] of fine condition, highly accomplished.

76-77 *They're loving . . . exercise*] The Quartos omit line 76 (*They're loving . . . nature*) and read *swelling* for *flowing* in line 77, where the Folios have *Flawing* (an obvious misprint) and *swelling*.

78 *parts with person*] accomplishments with attractive physique.

## SCENE IV TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

In this I do not call your faith in question,  
 So mainly as my merit: I cannot sing,  
 Nor heel the high lavolt, nor sweeten talk,  
 Nor play at subtil<sup>e</sup> games; fair virtues all,  
 To which the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant:  
 But I can tell that in each grace of these  
 There lurks a still and dumb-discoursive devil  
 That tempts most cunningly: but be not tempted. 90

CRES. Do you think I will?

TRO. No:

But something may be done that we will not:  
 And sometimes we are devils to ourselves,  
 When we will tempt the frailty of our powers,  
 Presuming on their changeful potency.

ÆNE. [*Within*] Nay, good my lord!

TRO. Come, kiss; and let us part.

PAR. [*Within*] Brother Troilus!

TRO. Good brother, come you hither;  
 And bring Æneas and the Grecian with you.

CRES. My lord, will you be true? 100

TRO. Who, I? alas, it is my vice, my fault:  
 Whiles others fish with craft for great opinion,  
 I with great truth catch mere simplicity;

85 *the high lavolt*] a high springing dance. Cf. "lavorla" in *Hen. V*, III, v, 33.

87 *pregnant*] apt.

96 *Presuming . . . potency*] Presuming them to be potent against change.

102 *opinion*] renown.

103 *I . . . simplicity*] I by mere straightforward honesty am content with a name for simple fidelity.

**TROILUS AND CRESSIDA    ACT IV**

Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns,  
With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare.  
Fear not my truth: the moral of my wit  
Is "plain and true"; there's all the reach of it.

*Enter* ÆNEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, DEIPHOBUS, and DIOMEDES

Welcome, Sir Diomed ! here is the lady  
 Which for Antenor we deliver you :  
 At the port, lord, I'll give her to thy hand ;  
 And by the way possess thee what she is.  
 Entreat her fair ; and, by my soul, fair Greek,  
 If e'er thou stand as mercy of my sword,  
 Name Cressid, and thy life shall be as safe  
 As Priam is in Ilion.

DIO. Fair Lady Cressid,  
So please you, save the thanks this prince expects:  
The lustre in your eye, heaven in your cheek,  
Pleads your fair usage; and to Diomed  
You shall be mistress, and command him wholly.

TRO. Grecian, thou dost not use me courteously, 120  
To shame the zeal of my petition to thee  
In praising her: I tell thee, lord of Greece,  
She is as far high-soaring o'er thy praises

106 *moral*] meaning.

110 *the port*] the gate of Troy; cf. line 135, *infra*.

121 *zeal*] Theobald's correction of the old reading *seale*. Troilus complains that Diomed is discourteous in promising Cressida protection on account of her beauty, instead of acknowledging his own impassioned request to "entreat her fair" by reason of his love for her. Cf. line 125, *infra*: "I charge thee use her well, even for my charge" (*i. e.*, at my bidding).

## SCENE IV TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

As thou unworthy to be call'd her servant.  
 I charge thee use her well, even for my charge;  
 For, by the dreadful Pluto, if thou dost not,  
 Though the great bulk Achilles be thy guard,  
 I'll cut thy throat.

DIO. O, be not moved, Prince Troilus:  
 Let me be privileged by my place and message  
 To be a speaker free; when I am hence, 130  
 I'll answer to my lust and know you, lord,  
 I'll nothing do on charge: to her own worth  
 She shall be prized but that you say "Be't so,"  
 I'll speak it in my spirit and honour "No!"

TRO. Come, to the port. I'll tell thee, Diomed,  
 This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head.  
 Lady, give me your hand; and, as we walk,  
 To our own selves bend we our needful talk.

[*Exeunt Troilus, Cressida, and Diomedes.*

[*A trumpet sounds.*

PAR. Hark! Hector's trumpet.

ÆNE. How have we spent this morning!  
 The prince must think me tardy and remiss, 140  
 That swore to ride before him to the field.

PAR. 'T is Troilus' fault: come, come, to field with  
 him.

131 *I'll answer to my lust*] I'll follow my inclination, I'll do as I please.

"Lust" was often used in the colourless sense of "liking," "wish."

132 *on charge*] at dictation.

132-133 *to her own worth . . . prized*] at her own worth she shall be  
 valued.

135 *port*] gate, as at 110, *supra*.

136 *brave*] insolence of speech.



DEL. Let us make ready straight.

ÆNE. Yea, with a bridegroom's fresh alacrity,  
Let us address to tend on Hector's heels:  
The glory of our Troy doth this day lie  
On his fair worth and single chivalry. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V — THE GRECIAN CAMP

*LISTS SET OUT*

*Enter AJAX, armed; AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, PATROCLUS, MENE-  
LAUS, ULYSSES, NESTOR, and others*

AGAM. Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,  
Anticipating time with starting courage.  
Give with thy trumpet a loud note to Troy,  
Thou dreadful Ajax, that the appalled air  
May pierce the head of the great combatant  
And hale him hither.

AJAX.                    Thou, trumpet, there's my purse.  
Now crack thy lungs, and split thy brazen pipe:  
Blow, villain, till thy sphered bias cheek  
Outswell the colic of puff'd Aquilon:

143-147 *Let us . . . chivalry*] Thus the Folios. The passage is omitted  
from the Quartos.

145 *address to tend*] prepare to attend.

1 *appointment*] equipment, preparation.

6 *trumpet*] trumpeter; a frequent usage.

8 *sphered bias cheek*] swollen out round, like the protuberance of a bowl  
on the side to which the leaden weight or bias is affixed. For "bias"  
cf. line 169, *infra*: "bias-drawing."

9 *Outswell . . . Aquilon*] Exceed in size the puffed cheek of the god of the  
north wind when convulsed by pain. The figure is taken from the

## SCENE V    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Come, stretch thy chest, and let thy eyes spout blood; 10  
Thou blow'st for Hector. *[Trumpet sounds.]*

ULYSS. No trumpet answers

ACHIL. 'T is but early days.

AGAM. Is not yond Diomed, with Calchas' daughter?

ULYSS. 'T is he, I ken the manner of his gait;  
He risks on the toe: that spirit of his  
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

*Enter DIO.MEDES, with CRESSIDA*

AGAM. Is this the Lady Cressid?

DIO. Even she.

AGAM. Most dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady.

NEST. Our general doth salute you with a kiss.

ULYSS. Yet is the kindness but particular; 20  
'T were better she were kiss'd in general.

NEST. And very courtly counsel: I'll begin.  
So much for Nestor.

ACHIL. I'll take that winter from your lips, fair lady:  
Achilles bids you welcome.

MEN. I had good argument for kissing once.

PATR. But that's no argument for kissing now;  
For thus popp'd Paris in his hardiment,  
And parted thus you and your argument.

---

drawing of the wind-god, with puffed out cheeks in medieval paintings. Suffering from "colic" suggests "windy convulsions."

24 *that winter*] the aged Nestor.

26, 27, 29 *argument*] In the first two places the word means "reason," and in the third, "theme."

28 *hardiment*] hardihood.

29 *And parted . . . argument*] Thus the Quartos. The line is omitted from the Folios.

ULYSS. O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns! 30  
For which we lose our heads to gild his horns.

PATR. The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine:  
Patroclus kisses you.

MEN. O, this is trim!

PATR. Paris and I kiss evermore for him.

MEN. I'll have my kiss, sir. Lady, by your leave.

CRES. In kissing, do you render or receive?

PATR. Both take and give.

CRES. I'll make my match to live,  
The kiss you take is better than you give;  
Therefore no kiss. 39

MEN. I'll give you boot, I'll give you three for  
one.

CRES. You're an odd man; give even, or give none.

MEN. An odd man, lady! every man is odd.

CRES. No, Paris is not; for, you know, 't is true,  
That you are odd, and he is even with you.

MEN. You fillip me o' the head.

CRES. No, I'll be sworn.

31 *we lose our heads . . . horns*] we sacrifice our reasons in order to shame the husbands; "horns" allude to the signs of disgrace traditionally ascribed to dishonoured husbands.

32 *The first . . . kiss*] Patroclus gives his first kiss in behalf of Menelaus.

37 *I'll make my match to live*] I'll stake my life.

40 *boot*] a bonus, something thrown in.

42 *every man is odd*] every man is a single individual.

44-46 *You fillip me . . . horn*] On Menelaus' complaint that Cressida lightly hits him on the head, Ulysses remarks that her finger-nail cannot do much injury to the horns on his head, the marks of his matrimonial dishonour.

## SCENE V TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

ULYSS. It were no match, your nail against his horn.  
May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?

CRES. You may.

ULYSS. I do desire it.

CRES. Why, beg then.

ULYSS. Why then, for Venus' sake, give me a kiss,  
When Helen is a maid again, and his. 50

CRES. I am your debtor; claim it when 't is due.

ULYSS. Never 's my day, and then a kiss of you.

DIO. Lady, a word: I'll bring you to your father.

*[Exit with Cressida.]*

NEST. A woman of quick sense.

ULYSS. Fie, fie upon her!

There 's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motive of her body.

O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,  
That give accosting welcome ere it comes,  
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts 60  
To every ticklish reader! set them down  
For sluttish spoils of opportunity,

And daughters of the game. *[Trumpet within.]*

56 *motive*] organ of movement, limb.

57 *encounterers*] forward women, flirts.

59 *accosting*] soliciting. Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, iii, 52-53: "'accost' is front her, board her, woo her, assail her." "Accosting" is Theobald's correction of the original reading *a coasting welcome* which has been interpreted to mean "a sidelong invitation" or "a look inviting from a distance." Cf. *M. Wives*, I, iii, 50: "she gives the leer of invitation."

60 *tables*] tablets.

62 *sluttish spoils of opportunity*] disreputable wenches, of whose chastity every opportunity makes prey.

## ACT IV

**AGAM.**

*Flourish.* Enter HECTOR, armed; ÆNEAS, TROILUS, and other  
Trojans, with Attendants

70

ÆNE. He cares not; he'll obey conditions.

ÆNE. If not Achilles, sir,

ACHIL. If not Achilles, nothing.

80

**69** *divided*] separated.

73 *securely*] over-confidently.

74 *misprizing*] underestimating.

78-81 *In the extremity . . . blank as nothing*] Hector viewed in relation to the qualities of valour and pride is more commendable than

## SCENE V TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

The other blank as nothing. Weigh him well,  
 And that which looks like pride is courtesy.  
 This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood:  
 In love whereof, half Hector stays at home;  
 Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek  
 This blended knight, half Trojan and half Greek.

ACHIL. A maiden battle then? O, I perceive you.

*Re-enter DIOMEDES*

AGAM. Here is Sir Diomed. Go, gentle knight,  
 Stand by our Ajax: as you and Lord Æneas  
 Consent upon the order of their fight,  
 So be it; either to the uttermost,  
 Or else a breath: the combatants being kin  
 Half stints their strife before their strokes begin.

90

*[Ajax and Hector enter the lists.]*

ULYSS. They are opposed already.

AGAM. What Trojan is that same that looks so heavy?

ULYSS. The youngest son of Priam, a true knight,  
 Not yet mature, yet matchless, firm of word,  
 Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue,  
 Not soon provoked nor being provoked soon calm'd;  
 His heart and hand both open and both free;  
 For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows;

100

any other man. For where valour is found in the greatest perfection,  
 he has more of it, and where pride is scarcest, he has less of it.

83 *This Ajax is half . . . blood*] Cf. line 120, *infra*, and note.

87 *maiden*] innocent, bloodless.

91-92 *either . . . breath*] whether it be a fight à l'outrance, or a mere  
 recreative exercise.

93 *Half stints*] Half stops.

98 *deedless . . . tongue*] not boasting of his deeds.

## ACT IV

110

AGAM. They are in action.

**TRO.** Hector, thou sleep'st;

AGAM. His blows are well disposed: there, Ajax!

[*Trumpets cease.*]

ÆNE.

**AJAX.** I am not warm yet; let us fight again.

DIO. As Hector pleases.

103 *impair*] Thus substantially, and probably rightly, all the early editions. The word is not found elsewhere in the sense required here *i. e.*, “unsuitable,” “unfit,” “unseemly.” Johnson substituted *impure*. But Ulysses is insisting, not on Troilus’ chastity, but on his sound judgment.

105-106 *subscribes To tender objects*] is responsive to the call of tenderness, or of things provoking pity.

107 *vindicative*] vindictive, revengeful.

111 *to his inches*] every inch of him.

*with private soul] confidentially.*

112 *translate him*] interpret his character.

SCENE V TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

HECT.                                  Why, then will I no more:  
Thou art, great lord, my father's sister's son,  
A cousin-german to great Priam's seed;  
The obligation of our blood forbids  
A gory emulation 'twixt us twain:  
Were thy commixture Greek and Trojan so,  
That thou couldst say "This hand is Grecian all,  
And this is Trojan; the sinews of this leg  
All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood  
Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister  
Bounds in my father's;" by Jove multipotent,  
Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member  
Wherein my sword had not impressure made  
Of our rank feud: but the just gods gainsay  
That any drop thou borrow'dst from thy mother,  
My sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword  
Be drained! Let me embrace thee, Ajax:  
By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms;  
Hector would have them fall upon him thus:  
Cousin, all honour to thee!

120

130

AJAX. I thank thee, Hector:  
 Thou art too gentle and too free a man:  
 I came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence  
 A great addition earned in thy death.

140

120-121 *Thou art . . . seed*] Ajax was son of Hesione, Priam's sister and Hector's aunt, by a Greek father, Telamon of Salamis. Cf. II, ii, 77, and line 83, *supra*.

134 *My sacred aunt*] Greek authors often apply conventionally this epithet to uncles and aunts.

139 *free*] magnanimous, generous.

141 *addition*] title to fame.



## ACT IV

HECT. Not Neoptolemus so mirable,  
On whose bright crest Fame with her loud'st Oyes  
Cries "This is he," could promise to himself  
A thought of added honour torn from Hector.

ÆNE. There is expectance here from both the sides,  
What further you will do.

HECT.                        We'll answer it;  
The issue is embracement: Ajax, farewell.

AJAX. If I might in entreaties find success, —  
 As sold I have the chance — I would desire  
 My famous cousin to our Grecian tents.

Dio. 'Tis Agamemnon's wish; and great Achilles  
Doth long to see unarm'd the valiant Hector.

HECT. Æneas, call my brother Troilus to me:  
And signify this loving interview  
To the expecters of our Trojan part;  
Desire them home. Give me thy hand, my cousin;  
I will go eat with thee, and see your knights.

**AJAX.** Great Agamemnon comes to meet us here.

HECT. The worthiest of them tell me name by name;

142 *Not Neoptolemus so mirable*] Achilles is clearly meant; but Neoptolemus was the individual surname only of his son Pyrrhus, who has been already mentioned, III, iii, 209, *supra*. Shakespeare apparently thought that Neoptolemus was Achilles' family name. "Mirable" means admirable.

**143** *Oyes*] *Oyez*; literally Old French ("give ear"). This is the cry with which heralds or ushers in courts of law command attention.

**147-148** *We'll answer . . . embracement]* We'll answer the expectation (*i. e.*, expectance, line 146) hereafter. The immediate issue is a friendly embrace.

**156** *part]* side.

# SCENE V TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

But for Achilles, my own searching eyes  
Shall find him by his large and portly size. 161

AGAM. Worthy of arms! as welcome as to one  
That would be rid of such an enemy;  
But that's no welcome: understand more clear,  
What's past and what's to come is strew'd with husks  
And formless ruin of oblivion;  
But in this extant moment, faith and troth,  
Strain'd purely from all hollow bias-drawing,  
Bids thee, with most divine integrity, 170  
From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome.

HECT. I thank thee, most imperious Agamemnon.

AGAM. [*To Troilus*] My well-famed lord of Troy, no  
less to you.

MEN. Let me confirm my princely brother's greeting;  
You brace of warlike brothers, welcome hither. 175

HECT. Who must we answer?

ÆNE. The noble Menelaus.

HECT. O, you, my lord! by Mars his gauntlet,  
thanks!

165-170 *But that's . . . integrity*] Thus the Folios. These lines are omitted from the Quartos.

169 *Strain'd . . . bias-drawing*] Purified of all tendency to swerve deceitfully; "strain'd" is similarly used IV, iv, 23, *supra*; "bias-drawing" refers to the devious movement of the bowl weighted with a bias. Cf. line 8, *supra*.

171 *From heart of very heart*] From the depth of my heart, my heart of hearts. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 71: "In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart."

172 *imperious*] imperial, royal.

177 *Mars his gauntlet*] "His" is the old form of the genitive.



## SCENE V TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

But, by great Mars the captain of us all,  
 Never like thee. Let an old man embrace thee;  
 And, worthy warrior, welcome to our tents. 200

ÆNE. 'Tis the old Nestor.

HECT. Let me embrace thee, good old chronicle,  
 That hast so long walk'd hand in hand with time:  
 Most reverend Nestor, I am glad to clasp thee.

NEST. I would my arms could match thee in con-  
 tention,  
 As they contend with thee in courtesy.

HECT. I would they could.

NEST. Ha!

By this white beard, I'd fight with thee to-morrow:  
 Well, welcome, welcome! — I have seen the time. 210

ULYSS. I wonder now how yonder city stands,  
 When we have here her base and pillar by us.

HECT. I know your favour, Lord Ulysses, well.  
 Ah, sir, there's many a Greek and Trojan dead,  
 Since first I saw yourself and Diomed  
 In Ilium, on your Greekish embassy.

ULYSS. Sir, I foretold you then what would ensue:  
 My prophecy is but half his journey yet;  
 For yonder walls, that pertly front your town,  
 Yond towers, whose wanton tops do buss the clouds, 220  
 Must kiss their own feet.

HECT. I must not believe you:  
 There they stand yet; and modestly I think,  
 The fall of every Phrygian stone will cost

---

220 *Yond towers . . . buss the clouds*] Cf. *Lucrece*, 1370, "cloud-kissing  
 Ilium."

A drop of Grecian blood: the end crowns all,  
And that old common arbitrator, Time,  
Will one day end it.

ULYSS.                      So to him we leave it.  
Most gentle and most valiant Hector, welcome:  
After the general, I beseech you next  
To feast with me and see me at my tent.

ACHIL. I shall forestall thee, Lord Ulysses, thou!      230  
Now, Hector, I have fed mine eyes on thee;  
I have with exact view perused thee, Hector,  
And quoted joint by joint.

HECT.                      Is this Achilles?

ACHIL. I am Achilles.

HECT. Stand fair, I pray thee: let me look on thee.

ACHIL. Behold thy fill.

HECT.                      Nay, I have done already.

ACHIL. Thou art too brief: I will the second time,  
As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb.

HECT. O, like a book of sport thou'lt read me o'er;  
But there's more in me than thou understand'st.      240  
Why dost thou so oppress me with thine eye?

ACHIL. Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his  
body  
Shall I destroy him? whether there, or there, or there?  
That I may give the local wound a name,

---

224 *the end crowns all*] a rendering of the Latin proverb, "finis coronat opus." Cf. *All's Well*, IV, iv, 35: "the fine's the crown."

230 *thou*] The old reading, for which *though*, *now*, and *there* (*i. e.*, on that point) have all been suggested; "thou" implies somewhat pointless impatience on Achilles' part.

233 *quoted*] noted, observed.

# SCENE V TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

And make distinct the very breach whereout  
Hector's great spirit flew: answer me, heavens!

HECT. It would discredit the blest gods, proud man,  
To answer such a question: stand again:  
Think'st thou to catch my life so pleasantly,  
As to prenominate in nice conjecture  
Where thou wilt hit me dead?

250

ACHIL. I tell thee, yea.

HECT. Wert thou an oracle to tell me so,  
I'd not believe thee. Henceforth guard thee well;  
For I'll not kill thee there nor there, nor there;  
But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm,  
I'll kill thee every where, yea, o'er and o'er.  
You wisest Grecians, pardon me this brag;  
His insolence draws folly from my lips;  
But I'll endeavour deeds to match these words,  
Or may I never —

AJAX. Do not chafe thee, cousin:

260

And you, Achilles, let these threats alone  
Till accident or purpose bring you to 't:  
You may have every day enough of Hector,  
If you have stomach: the general state, I fear,  
Can scarce entreat you to be odd with him.

HECT. I pray you, let us see you in the field:

250 *prenominate . . . conjecture*] define beforehand in precise calculation.

255 *stithied Mars his helm*] manufactured on the anvil, or stithy, Mars' helmet; "his" is the old form of the genitive. Cf. line 177, *supra*.

264 *stomach*] the inclination.

264-265 *the general state . . . odd with him*] I fear the whole state of Greece will scarcely prevail on you to be at odds or fight with him.

We have had pelting wars since you refused  
The Grecians' cause.

ACHIL.                      Dost thou entreat me, Hector?  
To-morrow do I meet thee, fell as death;  
To-night all friends.

HECT.                      Thy hand upon that match. 270

AGAM. First, all you peers of Greece, go to my tent;  
There in the full convive we: afterwards,  
As Hector's leisure and your bounties shall  
Concur together, severally entreat him.  
Beat loud the tabourines, let the trumpets blow,  
That this great soldier may his welcome know.

*[Exeunt all but Troilus and Ulysses.]*

TRO. My Lord Ulysses, tell me, I beseech you,  
In what place of the field doth Calchas keep?

ULYSS. At Menelaus' tent, most princely Troilus:  
There Diomed doth feast with him to-night; 280  
Who neither looks upon the heaven nor earth,  
But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view  
On the fair Cressid.

TRO. Shall I, sweet lord, be bound to you so much,  
After we part from Agamemnon's tent,  
To bring me thither?

ULYSS.                      You shall command me, sir.

---

267 *pelting wars*] petty, inconsiderable wars.

272 *in the full convive we*] we feast to repletion. Cf. V, i, 3, *infra*: "let us feast him to the height."

274 *entreat*] entertain.

275 *Beat loud the tabourines*] Beat loud the small drums. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less satisfactorily, *To taste your bounties*, these words following *entreat him* without any stop.

## SCENE V TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

As gentle tell me, of what honour was  
This Cressida in Troy? Had she no lover there  
That wails her absence?

TRO. O, sir, to such as boasting show their scars, 280  
A mock is due. Will you walk on, my lord?  
She was beloved, she loved; she is, and doth:  
But still sweet love is food for fortune's tooth. [*Exeunt.*

---

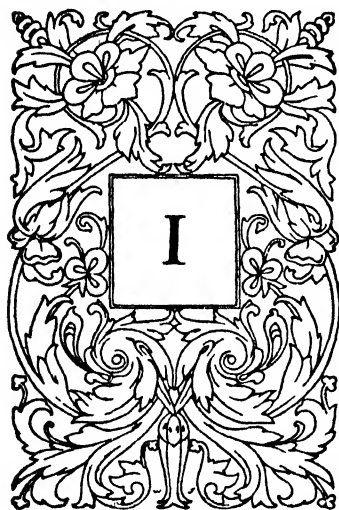
287 gentle] courteousy.





ACT FIFTH—SCENE I—THE GRECIAN CAMP  
BEFORE ACHILLES' TENT

ACHILLES *Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*



'LL HEAT HIS BLOOD  
with Greekish wine to-night,  
Which with my scimitar I'll cool  
to-morrow.  
Patroclus, let us feast him to the  
height.

PATR. Here comes Thersites.

*Enter THERSITES*

ACHIL. How now, thou core  
of envy!  
Thou crusty batch of nature,  
what's the news?

THER. Why, thou picture of  
what thou seemest, and idol of idiot-worshippers,  
here's a letter for thee.

4 *core*] kernel or heart: often used of an ulcer. Cf. II, i, 7, *supra*: "botchy core."

5 *batch*] usually applied to the loaves of bread included in one baking. The word seems suggested here by the epithet "crusty," *i. e.*, ill-tempered. Thersites has already been called a "cobloaf," II, i, 36, *supra*.

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

ACHIL. From whence, fragment?

THER. Why, thou full dish of fool, from Troy.

PATR. Who keeps the tent now?

10

THER. The surgeon's box, or the patient's wound.

PATR. We'll said, adversity! and what need these tricks?

THER. Prithee, be silent, boy; I profit not by thy talk: thou art thought to be Achilles' male varlet.

PAIR. Male varlet you rogue! what's that?

THER. Why, his masculine whore. Now, the rotten diseases of the south, the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs, loads o' gravel i' the back, lethargies, cold palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas, limekilns i' the palm, incurable bone-ache, and the rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, take and take again such preposterous discoveries!

8 *fragment*] bit of a man. Cf. *Cor.*, I, i, 220: "Go get you home, you fragments!"

11 *The surgeon's . . . wound*] a pun on the word "tent" (*i. e.*, the surgeon's probe) in line 10.

12 *adversity*] contrariness, perverse quibbler.

16-17 *the rotten diseases of the south*] The south wind was reckoned to blow from an unhealthy quarter. Cf. *Cor.*, I, iv, 30: "All the contagion of the south light on you."

18-21 *raw eyes . . . tetter*] This part of the loathsome catalogue is found only in the Quartos. It is represented in the Folios merely by the words *and the like*.

20 *imposthume . . . limekilns i' the palm*] abscess, . . . burning pains in the palms of the hand, due to gouty chalk-lumps.

21 *the rivelled fee-simple of the tetter*] the full ownership of a wrinkling scabby cutaneous disorder.

22 *preposterous discoveries*] the rank vices disclosed in the Greek camp.

PATR. Why, thou damnable box of envy, thou, what mean'st thou to curse thus?

THER. Do I curse thee?

PATR. Why, no, you ruinous butt; you whoreson indistinguishable cur, no.

THER. No! why art thou then exasperate, thou idle immaterial skein of sleeve silk, thou green sarcenet flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is pestered with such waterflies, diminutives of nature!

32

PATR. Out, gall!

THER. Finch-egg!

ACHIL. My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.

Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,

A token from her daughter, my fair love,

Both taxing me and gaging me to keep

An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:

40

Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay;

My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.

Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent:

26 *ruinous butt*] rotten winecask.

26-27 *indistinguishable cur*] cur of no breed.

29 *sleeve silk*] soft, flossy, unwoven silk. All Thersites' expressions here presume extreme flexibility, a weak, compliant nature.

31 *waterflies*] busy triflers, like flies flitting idly over the surface of a stream. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 82-83: "Dost know this *water-fly*?"

32 *diminutives*] dwarfs.

34 *Finch-egg*] A finch's egg is said to be very gaudily coloured, though very small.

38 *my fair love*] Polyxena. Cf. III, iii, 208, *supra*.

39 *taxing*] accusing.

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

This night in banqueting must all be spent.

Away, Patroclus! [*Exeunt Achilles and Patroclus.*]

THE. With too much blood and too little brain, these two may run mad; but, if with too much brain and too little blood they do, I'll be a curer of madmen. Here's Agamemnon, an honest fellow enough and one that loves quails; but he has not so much brain as ear-wax: and the goodly transformation of Jupiter there, his brother, the bull, the primitive statue and oblique memorial of cuckolds; a thrifty shoeing-horn in a chain, hanging at his brother's leg, — to what form but that he is, should wit larded with malice and malice forced with wit turn him to? To an ass, were nothing; he is both ass and ox: to an ox, were nothing; he is both ox and ass. To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, an owl, a puttock, or a herring without a roe, I would not

---

49 *quails*] harlots.

51-53 *the goodly transformation . . . cuckolds*] Agamemnon's brother, Menelaus, is somewhat confusedly likened, on account of the dishonour wrought him as husband by Helen's elopement and adultery, to Jupiter who metamorphosed himself into an horned bull in order to indulge his unlawful amours.

52 *oblique memorial*] figurative or metaphorical emblem.

53 *a thrifty shoeing-horn in a chain*] The expression carries on the sarcasm that Menelaus wears horns as Helen's deceived husband. He cannot take care of himself, and hangs on to his brother Agamemnon like a puny shoehorn to a chain.

55 *larded . . . forced*] garnished . . . stuffed; terms in cooking.

58 *fitchew*] polecat.

59 *a puttock*] a worthless kite.

*a herring without a roe*] Cf. 1 *Hen.* IV, II, iv, 122-123, "a shotten herring," and *Rom. and Jul.*, II, iv, 37.

care; but to be Menelaus! I would conspire against destiny. Ask me not what I would be, if I were not Thersites; for I care not to be the louse of a lazar, so I were not Menelaus. Hoy-day! spirits and fires!

*Enter* HECTOR, TROILUS, AJAX, AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES,  
NESTOR, MENELAUS, *and* DIOMEDES, *with lights*

AGAM. We go wrong, we go wrong.

AJAX. No, yonder 'tis;

There, where we see the lights.

HECT. I trouble you.

AJAX. No, not a whit.

*Re-enter* ACHILLES

ULYSS. Here comes himself to guide you.

ACHIL. Welcome, brave Hector; welcome, princes all.

AGAM. So now, fair Prince of Troy, I bid good night.

Ajax commands the guard to tend on you. 69

HECT. Thanks and good night to the Greeks' general.

MEN. Good night, my lord.

HECT. Good night, sweet Lord Menelaus.

THER. Sweet draught: sweet, quoth a'! sweet sink,  
sweet sewer.

ACHIL. Good night and welcome, both at once, to  
those

That go or tarry.

---

63 *spirits and fires*!] Thersites catches sight of the lights carried by Hector and his company, who now enter.

72-73 *draught . . . sink . . . sewer*] These words have all a like significance. Cf. *Tim. of Ath.*, V, i, 100: "drown them in a *draught*" (i. e., jakes).

## SCENE I TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

AGAM. Good night. [*Exeunt Agamemnon and Menelaus.*]

ACHIL. Old Nestor tarries; and you too, Diomed,  
Keep Hector company an hour or two.

DIO. I cannot, lord, I have important business,  
The tide whereof is now. Good night, great Hector. 80

HECT. Give me your hand.

ULYSS. [*Aside to Troilus*] Follow his torch; he goes to  
Calchas' tent:

I'll keep you company.

TRO. Sweet sir, you honour me.

HECT. And so, good night.

[*Exit Diomedes; Ulysses and Troilus following.*]

ACHIL. Come, come, enter my tent.

[*Exeunt Achilles, Hector, Ajax, and Nestor.*]

THER. That same Diomed's a false-hearted rogue, a  
most unjust knave; I will no more trust him when he  
leers than I will a serpent when he hisses: he will spend  
his mouth and promise, like Brabbl' the hound; but  
when he performs, astronomers foretell it; it is pro-  
digious, there will come some change; the sun borrows of  
the moon when Diomed keeps his word. I will rather  
leave to see Hector than not to dog him: they say he  
keeps a Trojan drab and uses the traitor Calchas'  
tent: I'll after. Nothing but lechery! all incontinent 95  
varlets! [*Exit.*]

---

80 *tide*] season.

88-89 *spend his mouth . . . hound*] bark like a young hound, which  
sportsmen usually called a "brabbl'."

90 *prodigious*] ominous, portentous.

92-93 *leave to see*] give up seeing.

**ACT V**

**SCENE II—THE SAME—BEFORE CALCHAS' TENT**

*Enter* DIOMEDES

**DIO.** What, are you up here, ho? speak.

CAL. [*Within*] Who calls?

DIO. Diomed. Calchas, I think. Where's your daughter?

CAL. [Within] She comes to you.

*Enter* TROILUS and ULYSSES, at a distance; after them, THERSITES

ULYSS. Stand where the torch may not discover us.

*Enter* CRESSIDA

**Tro.** Cressid comes forth to him.

DIO.                       How now, my charge!

CRES. Now, my sweet guardian! Hark, a word with  
you. *[Whispers.*

**TRO.** Yea, so familiar!

ULYSS. She will sing any man at first sight.

HER. And any man may sing her, if he can take her cliff: she's noted.

**DIO.** Will you remember?

CRES. Remember! yes.

**DIO.** Nay, but do, then;

**And let your mind be coupled with your words.**

TRO. What should she remember?

## Ulyss. List.

11 *cliff*) a form of clef, the key in music. The quibbling is continued in "she's *noted*," a word implying that Cressida is like the notes of a piece of music, which are at the service of any one who can read them.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

CRES. Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly.

THER. Roguery!

DIO. Nay, then, —

20

CRES. I'll tell you what, —

DIO. Foh, foh! come, tell a pin: you are forsworn.

CRES. In faith, I cannot: what would you have me do?

THER. A juggling trick, — to be secretly open.

DIO. What did you swear you would bestow on me?

CRES. I prithee, do not hold me to mine oath;

Bid me do any thing but that, sweet Greek.

DIO. Good night.

TRO. Hold, patience!

ULYSS. How now, Trojan!

30

CRES. Diomed, —

DIO. No, no, good night: I'll be your fool no more.

TRO. Thy better must.

CRES. Hark, one word in your ear.

TRO. O plague and madness!

ULYSS. You are moved, prince; let us depart, I pray you,

Lest your displeasure should enlarge itself  
To wrathful terms: this place is dangerous;  
The time right deadly; I beseech you, go.

TRO. Behold, I pray you!

ULYSS. Nay, good my lord, go off:

You flow to great distraction; come, my lord.

41

22 *tell a pin*] an ejaculation of impatience, like "nonsense! not a bit of it!"

Cf. *M. Wives*, I, i, 103: "Tut, a *pin*!"

36 *moved*] excited.

41 *You flow to great distraction*] You are going the way of utter mad-



**TROILUS AND CRESSIDA      ACT V**

**TRO.** I pray thee, stay.

ULYSS.                    You have not patience; come.

**Tro.** I pray you, stay; by hell and all hell's torments,  
I will not speak a word.

DIO. And so, good night.

CRES. Nay, but you part in anger.

TRO.                   Doth that grieve thee?

**O wither'd truth !**

ULYSS.           Why, how now, lord!

TRO. By Jove,

**I will be patient.**

**CRES.** Guardian! — why, Greek!

**DIO.** Foh, foh ! adieu ; you palter.

CRES. In faith, I do not: come hither once again.

ULYSS. You shake, my lord, at something: will you so  
go?

**You will break out.**

**TRO.** She strokes his cheek!

ULYSS. Come, come.

Tro. Nay, stay; by Jove, I will not speak a word:

There is between my will and all offences

**A guard of patience: stay a little while.**

THE. How the devil luxury, with his fat rump and

ness, you are getting completely maddened. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less satisfactorily, *destruction* for *distraction*. Cf. V, iii, 85, *infra*, where again the Folios read *distraction* for the Quarto *destruction*.

48 *palter*] shuffle. Cf. II, iii, 227, *supra*.

55 *the devil luxury*] the sin of incontinence. Cf. *Lear*, IV, vi, 117: "To't, *luxury*, pell mell! for I lack soldiers."

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

potato-finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery,  
fry!

DIO. But will you, then?

CRES. In faith, I will, la; never trust me else.

DIO. Give me some token for the surety of it.

CRES. I'll fetch you one. [Exit. 60

ULYSS. You have sworn patience.

TRO. Fear me not, sweet lord;  
I will not be myself, nor have cognition  
Of what I feel: I am all patience.

*Re-enter CRESSIDA*

TRO. Now the pledge; now, now, now!

CRES. Here, Diomed, keep this sleeve.

TRO. O beauty! where is thy faith?

ULYSS. My lord, —

TRO. I will be patient; outwardly I will.

CRES. You look upon that sleeve; behold it well.  
He loved me — O false wench! — Give 't me again.

DIO. Whose was 't? 70

CRES. It is no matter, now I have 't again.  
I will not meet with you to-morrow night:  
I prithee, Diomed, visit me no more.

THER. Now she sharpens: well said, whetstone!

DIO. I shall have it.

CRES. What, this?

DIO. Ay, that.

---

56 *potato-finger*] The potato was regarded as an aphrodisiac, and is only noticed by Shakespeare in that significance. See *M. Wives*, V, v, 17, note.

65 *this sleeve*] the token which Troilus had given Cressida, IV, iv, 69, *supra*, in exchange for her glove.

## ACT V

80

**CRES.** You shall not have it, Diomed; faith, you shall not;

90

CRES. Well, well, 't is done, 't is past; and yet it is not;  
I will not keep my word.

94 Wert thou . . . horn] In the morality plays the devil was invariably represented as wearing a formidable horn.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

DIO. Why then, farewell;  
Thou never shalt mock Diomed again.

CRES. You shall not go: one cannot speak a word,  
But it straight starts you.

DIO. I do not like this fooling. 100

THER. Nor I, by Pluto: but that that likes not you  
Pleases me best.

DIC. What, shall I come? the hour?

CRES. Ay, come: O Jove! do come: I shall be  
plagued.

DIO. Farewell till then.

CRES. Good night: I prithee, come.  
[Exit Diomedes.]

Troilus, farewell! one eye yet looks on thee,

But with my heart the other eye doth see.

Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,

The error of our eye directs our mind:

What error leads must err; O, then conclude

Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude. [Exit. 110

THER. A proof of strength she could not publish more  
Unless she said "My mind is now turn'd whore."

ULYSS. All's done, my lord.

TRO. It is.

ULYSS. Why stay we then?

TRO. To make a recordation to my soul

Of every syllable that here was spoke.

But if I tell how these two did co-act,

Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?

106 *with my heart*] in accord with the new choice of my heart.

111 *A proof . . . more*] She could not proclaim a stronger proof.

114 *To make a recordation to my soul*] To make a record in my mind.

Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,  
 An esperance so obstinately strong,  
 That doth invert the attest of eyes and ears; 120  
 As if those organs had deceptious functions,  
 Created only to calumniate.  
 Was Cressid here?

ULYSS. I cannot conjure, Trojan.

TRO. She was not, sure.

ULYSS. Most sure she was.

TRO. Why, my negation hath no taste of madness.

ULYSS. Nor mine, my lord: Cressid was here but now.

TRO. Let it not be believed for womanhood!  
 Think, we had mothers; do not give advantage  
 To stubborn critics, apt without a theme  
 For depravation, to square the general sex 130  
 By Cressid's rule: rather think this not Cressid.

ULYSS. What hath she done, prince, that can soil our  
 mothers?

TRO. Nothing at all, unless that this were she.

THER. Will a' swagger himself out on 's own eyes?

TRO. This she? no, this is Diomed's Cressida:  
 If beauty have a soul, this is not she;  
 If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,

119 *esperance*] hope; the French word.

120 *the attest*] Thus the Quartos. The First and Fourth Folios misprint  
*that test*.

123 *I cannot conjure*] I am not a magician. I cannot conjure up apparitions. No false image of Cressid was here.

129 *stubborn critics*] perverse libellers.

130 *depravation*] detraction.

*to square*] to measure.

132 *soil*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *spoil*.

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

If sanctimony be the gods' delight,  
 If there be rule in unity itself,  
 This is not she. O madness of discourse, 140  
 That cause sets up with and against itself!  
 Bi-fold authority! where reason can revolt  
 Without perdition, and loss assume all reason  
 Without revolt: this is, and is not, Cressid!  
 Within my soul there doth conduce a fight  
 Of this strange nature, that a thing inseparate  
 Divides more wider than the sky and earth;  
 And yet the spacious breadth of this division  
 Admits no orifex for a point as subtle  
 As Ariachne's broken woof to enter. 150

139 *If there be . . . itself*] If there be a rule that one is one.

140-144 *O madness . . . revolt*] O madness of reasoning when argument is advanced which tells at once for and against one point of view. Ambiguous is the authority which leads the reason to repudiate evidence of truth without involving its own destruction, and at the same time causes the mind, after losing all sense of the facts, to bear the aspect of sanity without contradiction. *By-fold authority* is the reading of the Quartos. The Folios read, less intelligibly, *By foul authority*, where "foul" must mean, if it be accepted, "discredited."

145 *conduce*] converge or assemble. Thus the old editions. Rowe substituted *commence*.

146 *inseparate*] indissoluble.

148-150 *the spacious . . . enter*] the wide expanse which intervenes between earth and heaven knits them together so closely that there seems no dividing passage between them at all. Thus, Troilus subtly reasons, the plighted troth of love is indissoluble.

149 *orifex*] orifice, opening.

150 *Ariachne*] An apparent confusion between Arachne the maid of Lydia, whom Minerva changed into a spider for challenging the goddess' supreme skill in weaving (cf. Ovid, *Metam.*, VI, i, *seq.*) and

Instance, O instance! strong as Pluto's gates;  
 Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven:  
 Instance, O instance! strong as heaven itself;  
 The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolved and loosed;  
 And with another knot, five-finger-tied,  
 The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,  
 The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics  
 Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.

ULYSS. May worthy Troilus be half attach'd  
 With that which here his passion doth express? 160

TRO. Ay, Greek; and that shall be divulged well  
 In characters as red as Mars his heart  
 Inflamed with Venus: never did young man fancy  
 With so eternal and so fix'd a soul.  
 Hark, Greek: as much as I do Cressid love,  
 So much by weight hate I her Diomed:  
 That sleeve is mine that he'll bear on his helm:  
 Were it a casque composed by Vulcan's skill,  
 My sword should bite it: not the dreadful spout  
 Which shipmen do the hurricano call, 170

Ariadne of Naxos, the beloved of Theseus, who released her from the labyrinth in which the Minotaur confined her, by means of the clue of thread with which she supplied him. Cf. *Two Gent.*, IV, iv, 163. Doubtless metrical exigencies encouraged Shakespeare's mistake.

151 *Instance*] Proof, example.

155 *five-finger-tied*] tied with her whole hand.

156 *orts*] refuse, leavings.

158 *o'er-eaten faith*] faithfulness of which she had surfeited.

159-160 *be half attach'd With that which*] seriously feel half of that which.

163 *fancy*] love.

170 *hurricano*] waterspout. Cf. *Lear*, III, ii, 2: "You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout."

## SCENE II TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

Constringed in mass by the almighty sun,  
Shall dizzy with more clamour Neptune's ear  
In his descent, than shall my prompted sword  
Falling on Diomed.

THER. He'll tickle it for his concupy.

TRO. O Cressid! O false Cressid! false, false, false!  
Let all untruths stand by thy stained name,  
And they'll seem glorious.

ULYSS. O, contain yourself;  
Your passion draws ears Lither.

*Enter ÆNEAS*

ÆNE. I have been seeking you this hour, my lord:  
Hector by this is arming him in Troy; 181  
Ajax your guard stays to conduct you home.

TRO. Have with you, prince. My courteous lord,  
adieu.

Farewell, revolted fair! and, Diomed,  
Stand fast, and wear a castle on thy head!

ULYSS. I'll bring you to the gates.

TRO. Accept distracted thanks.

*[Exeunt Troilus, Æneas, and Ulysses.]*

THER. Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I  
would croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode.  
Patroclus will give me any thing for the intelligence of

---

171 *Constringed in mass*] All drawn tight together.

175 *He'll tickle it*] He'll punish him.  
*concupy*] concupiscence, lust; a jesting form.

177 *untruths*] faithless persons.

185 *wear . . . head*] guard your head with armour of the greatest possible strength. Cf. the proverbial phrase "as safe as in a castle."

189 *bode*] be of evil portent, prophecy evil.



this whore: the parrot will not do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab. Lechery, lechery! still wars and lechery! nothing else holds fashion. A burning devil take them! [Exit.]

SCENE III — TROY

BEFORE PRIAM'S PALACE

*Enter HECTOR and ANDROMACHE*

AND. When was my lord so much ungently temper'd,  
To stop his ears against admonishment?  
Unarm, unarm, and do not fight to-day.

HECT. You train me to offend you; get you in:  
By all the everlasting gods, I'll go!

AND. My dreams will, sure, prove ominous to the day.

HECT. No more, I say.

*Enter CASSANDRA*

CAS.                                Where is my brother Hector?

AND. Here, sister; arm'd, and bloody in intent.  
Consort with me in loud and dear petition;  
Pursue we him on knees; for I have dream'd 10  
Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night  
Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of slaughter.

---

191 *the parrot . . . almond*] a proverbial phrase suggestive of irresistible desire. The converse of the expression, "An almond for a parrot," was the title of a popular tract in the "Martin Marprelate" controversy, 1589.

192 *commodious*] accommodating.

193-194 *A burning devil*] A reference to venereal fever.

9 *dear*] desperate.

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

CAS. O, 't is true.

HECT. Ho! bid my trumpet sound!

CAS. No notes of sally, for the heavens, sweet brother.

HECT. Be gone, I say: the gods have heard me swear.

CAS. The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows:  
They are polluted offerings, more abhorr'd  
Than spotted livers in the sacrifice.

AND. O, be persuaded! do not count it holy  
To hurt by being just: it is as lawful,  
For we would give much, to use violent thefts  
And rob in the behalf of charity.

20

CAS. It is the purpose that makes strong the vow;  
But vows to every purpose must not hold:  
Unarm, sweet Hector.

HECT. Hold you still, I say;  
Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate:  
Life every man holds dear; but the dear man  
Holds honour far more precious-dear than life.

*Enter TROILUS*

How now, young man! mean'st thou to fight to-day?

AND. Cassandra, call my father to persuade.

30

*[Exit Cassandra.]*

16 *hot and peevish*] hot-headed and stupid.

20-22 *To hurt . . . charity*] These lines are omitted from the Quartos.

21 *For we . . . thefts*] The Folio here inserts *count* after *would* and misprints *use* as *as*; *count* is due to a printer's mistaken vision in repeating the word from line 19. Tyrwhitt made the needful correction. "For" means "because."

26 *keeps the weather of*] has or maintains superior control of; a nautical expression like "keep the wind of."

27 *the dear man*] the true, earnest man.

HECT. No, faith, young Troilus; doff thy harness,  
youth:

I am to-day i' the vein of chivalry:  
Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,  
And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.  
Unarm thee, go; and doubt thou not, brave boy,  
I'll stand to-day for thee and me and Troy.

TRO. Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,  
Which better fits a lion than a man.

HECT. What vice is that, good Troilus? chide me for  
it.

TRO. When many times the captive Grecian falls,      40  
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,  
You bid them rise and live.

HECT. O, 't is fair play.

TRO. Fool's play, by heaven, Hector.

HECT. How now! how now!

TRO. For the love of all the gods,  
Let's leave the hermit pity with our mother;  
And when we have our armours buckled on,  
The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,  
Spur them to ruthless work, rein them from ruth!

HECT. Fie, savage, fie!

TRO. Hector, then 't is wars.

HECT. Troilus, I would not have you fight to-day.      50

---

31 *harness*] armour.

32 *i' the vein of chivalry*] in the heroic vein.

34 *brushes*] collisions.

38 *better fits a lion*] In medieval authors the lion was invariably credited  
with a generous temperament, especially to prostrate victims.

48 *ruthful*] piteous, exciting pity, brutal. "Ruth" means "pity."

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

TRO. Who should withhold me?  
 Not fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars  
 Beckoning with fiery truncheon my retire;  
 Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees,  
 Their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears;  
 Nor you, my brother, with your true sword drawn,  
 Opposed to hinder me, should stop my way,  
 But by my ruin.

*Re-enter CASSANDRA, with PRIAM*

CAS. Lay hold upon him, Priam, hold him fast:  
 He is thy crutch; now if thou lose thy stay, 60  
 Thou on him leaning, and all Troy on thee,  
 Fall all together.

PRI. Come, Hector, come, go back:  
 Thy wife hath dream'd; thy mother hath had visions;  
 Cassandra doth foresee; and I myself  
 Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt,  
 To tell thee that this day is ominous:  
 Therefore, come back.

HECT. Æneas is afield;  
 And I do stand engaged to many Greeks,  
 Even in the faith of valour, to appear  
 This morning to them.

PRI. Ay, but thou shalt not go. 70

HECT. I must not break my faith.

---

55 *o'ergalled . . . tears*] greatly inflamed with constant flow of tears.

58 *But . . . ruin*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the line.

65 *enrapt*] in ecstasy.

69 *in the faith of valour*] by dint of honour which holds among valorous men.

You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sir,  
 Let me not shame respect; but give me leave  
 To take that course by your consent and voice,  
 Which you do here forbid me, royal Priam.

CAS. O Priam, yield not to him!

AND. Do not, dear father.

HECT. Andromache, I am offended with you:  
 Upon the love you bear me, get you in.

*[Exit Andromache.]*

TRO. This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl  
 Makes all these bodements.

CAS. O, farewell, dear Hector! 80  
 Look, how thou diest! look, how thy eye turns pale!  
 Look, how thy wounds do bleed at many vents!  
 Hark, how Troy roars! how Hecuba cries out!  
 How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth!  
 Behold, distraction, frenzy and amazement,  
 Like witless antics, one another meet,  
 And all cry "Hector! Hector's dead! O Hector!"

TRO. Away! away!

CAS. Farewell: yet, soft! Hector, I take my leave:  
 Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive. *[Exit.]* 90

HECT. You are amazed, my liege, at her exclaim:

73 *shame respect*] disgrace the filial relation.

80 *bodements*] presages of evil.

84 *shrills . . . forth*] screams out her lamentation.

85 *distraction*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *destruction*. Cf. V,  
 ii, 41, *supra*.

85 *amazement*] utter bewilderment.

86 *antics*] buffoons.

91 *exclaim*] outcry.

# SCENE III TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Go in and cheer the town: we'll forth and fight,  
Do deeds worth praise and tell you them at night.

PRI. Farewell: the gods with safety stand about thee!

*[Exeunt severally Priam and Hector. Alarum.]*

TRO. They are at it, hark! Proud Diomed, believe,  
I come to lose my arm, or win my sleeve.

*Enter PANDARUS*

PAN. Do you hear, my lord? do you hear?

TRO. What now?

PAN. Here's a letter come from yond poor girl.

TRO. Let me read.

100

PAN. A whoreson tisick, a whoreson rascally tisick so troubles me, and the foolish fortune of this girl; and what one thing, what another, that I shall leave you one o' these days: and I have a rheum in mine eyes too, and such an ache in my bones that, unless a man were cursed, I cannot tell what to think on't. What says she there?

TRO. Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart;

The effect doth operate another way. *[Tearing the letter.]*

Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together. 110

My love with words and errors still she feeds,

But edifies another with her deeds. *[Exeunt severally.]*

101 *tisick*] cough, phthisic.

104 *a rheum*] a tearful flow.

105-106 *unless a man were cursed*] unless I were under a ban.

112 *her deeds*] The First Folio here needlessly inserts three lines exchanged by Pandarus and Troilus on parting, which are repeated again, *infra*, Scene x, lines 32-34. See note there.

SCENE IV — THE FIELD BETWEEN TROY AND THE  
GRECIAN CAMP

*Alarums. Excursions. Enter THERSITES*

THER. Now they are clapper-clawing one another; I'll go look on. That dissembling abominable varlet, Diomed, has got that same scurvy doting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm: I would fain see them meet; that that same young Trojan ass, that loves the whore there, might send that Greekish whore-masterly villain, with the sleeve, back to the dissembling luxurious drab, of a sleeveless errand. O' the t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals, that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog-fox, Ulysses, is not proved worth a blackberry. They set me up in policy that mongrel cur, Ajax, against that dog of as bad a kind, Achilles: and now is the cur Ajax prouder than the cur Achilles, and will not arm to-day; whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion.

---

1 *clapper-clawing*] handling or mauling. See the publisher's preface to the Second Quarto of this play, "a new play never *clapper-claw'd* with the *palmes* of the vulgar."

8 *luxurious*] lascivious.

*sleeveless*] useless, unprofitable.

9 *swearing rascals*] hardly an appropriate epithet for Ulysses and Nestor, even in Thersites' abusive mouth. Theobald suggested *sneering*.

15-16 *the Grecians . . . opinion*] the Greeks begin to announce devotion to the cause of barbarism, and civil rule falls into ill repute.

## SCENE IV TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

---

*Enter DIOMEDES and TROILUS*

Soft! here comes sleeve, and t'other.

TRO. Fly not; for shouldst thou take the river Styx,  
I would swim after.

DIO. Thou dost miscall retire:  
I do not fly; but advantageous care  
Withdrew me from the odds of multitude:  
Have at thee!

THER. Hold thy whore, Grecian! Now for thy whore,  
Trojan! Now the sleeve, row the sleeve!

*[Exeunt Troilus and Diomedes, fighting.]*

*Enter HECTOR*

HECT. What art thou, Greek? art thou for Hector's  
match?

Art thou of blood and honour?

THER. No, no: I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave;  
a very filthy rogue.

HECT. I do believe thee. Live. *[Exit.]*

THER. God-a-mercy, that thou wilt believe me; but a  
plague break thy neck for frightening me! What's become  
of the wenching rogues? I think they have swallowed  
one another: I would laugh at that miracle: yet in a  
sort lechery eats itself. I'll seek them. *[Exit.]*

---

20 *advantageous care*] caution in order to secure the advantage.



**SCENE V—ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD**

*Enter* DIOMEDES *and* Servant

DIO. Go, go, my servant, take thou Troilus' horse;  
Present the fair steed to my lady Cressid:  
Fellow, commend my service to her beauty;  
Tell her I have chastised the amorous Trojan,  
And am her knight by proof.

SER. I go, my lord. [*Exit.*]

*Enter* AGAMEMNON

AGAM. Renew, renew! The fierce Polydamas  
Hath beat down Menon: bastard Margarelon  
Hath Doreus prisoner,  
And stands colossus-wise, waving his beam,  
Upon the pashed corsers of the kings  
Epistrophus and Cedius: Polyxenes is slain;  
Amphimachus and Thoas deadly hurt;  
Patroclus ta'en or slain; and Palamedes  
Sore hurt and bruised: the dreadful sagittary  
Appals our numbers: haste we, Diomed,  
To reinforcement, or we perish all.

10

**7** *bastard Margarelon*] A Trojan warrior invented by medieval tradition; he figures in the pseudo-Homeric romances of both Lydgate and Caxton.

9 *his beam*] the shaft of his spear.

10 *pashed*] crushed, pounded. Cf. II, iii, 198, *supra*.

14 *the dreadful sagittary*] a centaur archer, who according to the medieval tradition fought on the Trojan side.

## SCENE V    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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*Enter* NESTOR

NEST. Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles,  
And bid the snail-paced Ajax arm for shame.  
There is a thousand Hectors in the field:  
Now here he fights on Galathea his horse, 20  
And there lacks work; anon he's there afoot,  
And there they fly or die, like scaled sculls  
Before the belching whale; then is he yonder,  
And there the strawy Greeks, ripe for his edge,  
Fall down before him, like the mower's swath:  
Here, there and every where he leaves and takes,  
Dexterity so obeying appetite  
That what he will he does, and docs so much  
That proof is call'd impossibility.

*Enter* ULYSSES

ULYSS. O, courage, courage, princes! great Achilles 30  
Is arming, weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance:  
Patroclus' wounds have roused his drowsy blood,  
Together with his mangled Myrmidons,

---

20 *Galathea his horse*] Medieval tradition gives this name to Hector's horse.

22 *like scaled sculls*] like schools or shoals of fish, which are furnished with scales.

24 *strawy*] like straw. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read wrongly *straying*.

25 *swath*] the amount of grass cut down by a single stroke of the scythe.

29 *proof is call'd impossibility*] what proves true is dubbed impossible; impossibility is converted into proved fact.

That noseless, handless, hack'd and chipp'd, come to  
him,

Crying on Hector. Ajax hath lost a friend,  
And foams at mouth, and he is arm'd, and at it,  
Roaring for Troilus; who hath done to-day  
Mad and fantastic execution,  
Engaging and redeeming of himself,  
With such a careless force and forceless care, 40  
As if that luck, in very spite of cunning,  
Bade him win all.

*Enter AJAX*

AJAX. Troilus! thou coward Troilus! [Exit.

DIO. Ay, there, there.

NEST. So, so, we draw together.

*Enter ACHILLES*

ACHIL. Where is this Hector?  
Come, come, thou boy-queller, show thy face;  
Know what it is to meet Achilles angry:  
Hector! where's Hector? I will none but Hector.  
[Exeunt.]

35 *Crying on Hector*] Exclaiming against Hector.

44 *we draw together*] we are pulling together; a reference to Ajax's recent alienation from the Greeks.

45 *boy-queller*] boy-killer; "quell" is an old word for "kill." Hector had killed Patroclus.

SCENE VI TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

*Enter AJAX*

*Ezier* DIOMEDES

AJAX. What wouldst thou?

AJAX. Were I the general, thou shouldst have my  
office

Ere that correction. Troilus, I say! what, Troilus!

*Enter* TROILUS

And pay thy life thou owest me for my horse.

DIO. Ha, art thou there?

**AJAX.** I 'll fight with him alone: stand, Diomed.

DIO. He is my prize; I will not look upon. 10

TRO. Come both, you cogging Greeks; have at you  
both! *[Exeunt, fighting.]*

*Enter* HECTOR

10 *look upon*] look on, stand by as an onlooker.

11 *coqqinq*] cheating.

*Enter ACHILLES*

ACHIL. Now do I see thee; ha! have at thee,  
Hector!

HECT. Pause, if thou wilt.

ACHIL. I do disdain thy courtesy, proud Trojan:  
Be happy that my arms are out of use:  
My rest and negligence befriends thee now,  
But thou anon shalt hear of me again;  
Till when, go seek thy fortune. [Exit.

HECT. Fare thee well:  
I would have been much more a fresher man, 20  
Had I expected thee.

*Re-enter TROILUS*

How now, my brother!

TRO. Ajax hath ta'en Æneas: shall it be?  
No, by the flame of yonder glorious heaven,  
He shall not carry him; I'll be ta'en too,  
Or bring him off. Fate, hear me what I say!  
I reckon not though I end my life to-day. [Exit.

*Enter one in sumptuous armour*

HECT. Stand, stand, thou Greek; thou art a goodly  
mark.  
No? wilt thou not? I like thy armour well;  
I'll frush it, and unlock the rivets all, 29  
But I'll be master of it. Wilt thou not, beast, abide?  
Why then, fly on, I'll hunt thee for thy hide. [Exeunt.

---

24 *carry*] triumph over.

29 *frush it*] break it up. Not used elsewhere by Shakespeare.

## SCENE VII TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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### SCENE VII—ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter* ACHILLES, *with* Myrmidons

ACHIL. Come here about me, you my Myrmidons;  
Mark what I say. Attend me where I wheel:  
Strike not a stroke, but keep yourselves in breath:  
And when I have the bloody Hector found,  
Empale him with your weapons round about;  
In fellest manner execute your aims.  
Follow me, sirs, and my proceedings eye:  
It is decreed Hector the great must die. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* MENELAUS and PARIS, *fighting*: then THERSITES

THER. The cuckold and the cuckold-maker are at it.  
Now, bull! now, dog! 'loo, Paris, 'loo! now my double-  
henned sparrow! 'loo, Paris, 'loo! The bull has the  
game: ware horns, ho! [*Exeunt Paris and Menelaus.* 12

*Enter* MARGARELON

MAR. Turn, slave, and fight.

THER. What art thou?

MAR. A bastard son of Priam's.

THER. I am a bastard too; I love bastards: I am a  
bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bas-  
tard in valour, in every thing illegitimate. One bear

---

6 *aims*] Capell's emendation of the original reading *arms*. But "execute your arms" might well be retained in the sense of "put your arms to full use."

# TROILUS AND CRESSIDA      ACT V

will not bite another, and wherefore should one bastard? Take heed, the quarrel's most ominous to us: if the son of a whore fight for a whore, he tempts judgement: farewell, bastard. [Exit.]

MAR. The devil take thee, coward! [Exit.]

## SCENE VIII — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter HECTOR*

HECT. Most putrefied core, so fair without,  
Thy goodly armour thus hath cost thy life.  
Now is my day's work done; I'll take good breath:  
Rest, sword; thou hast thy fill of blood and death.  
*[Puts off his helmet and hangs his shield behind him.]*

*Enter ACHILLES and Myrmidons*

ACHIL. Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set;  
How ugly night comes breathing at his heels:  
Even with the vail and darkening of the sun,  
To close the day up, Hector's life is done.

HECT. I am unarm'd; forgo this vantage, Greek.

ACHIL. Strike, fellows, strike; this is the man I seek.

*[Hector falls.]*

So, Ilion, fall thou next! now, Troy, sink down! 11  
Here lies thy heart, thy sinews, and thy bone.

---

1 *Most putrefied core*] Most rotten at heart. Hector apostrophises the corpse of the "one in sumptuous armour" whom he attacked at the close of Scene vi, *supra*. Cf. stage direction before line 27 there.

7 *the vail*] the setting or lowering.

## SCENE IX TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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On, Myrmidons, and cry you all amain,  
"Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain."

[*A retreat sounded.*

Hark! a retire upon our Grecian part.

MYR. The Trojan trumpets sound the like, my lord.

ACHIL. The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the  
earth,

And stickler-like the armies separates.

My half-suppl'd sword that frankly would have fed,  
Pleased with this dainty bait, thus goes to bed. 20

[*Sheathes his sword.*

Come, tie his body to my horse's tail;  
Along the field I will the Trojan trail.

[*Exeunt. A retreat sounded.*

## SCENE IX — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter AGAMEMNON, AJAX, MENELAUS, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and the  
rest, marching. Shouts within*

AGAM. Hark! hark! what shout is that?

NEST. Peace, drums!

[*Within*] "Achilles! Achilles! Hector's slain! Achilles!"

---

17 *dragon wing of night*] In classical mythology the chariot of night was drawn by flying dragons. Cf. *Cymb.*, II, ii, 48: "*dragons of the night.*"

18 *stickler-like*] like an umpire, who armed with a stick or wand was wont to separate combatants in sporting competitions.

19-20 *My half-suppl'd . . . bed*] Pope placed these lines in the margin as quite unworthy of Shakespeare.

20 *bait*] Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads *bed*, and the other Folios *bit*.



DIO. The bruit is, Hector's slain, and by Achilles.

AJAX. If it be so, yet bragless let it be;  
Great Hector was a man as good as he.

AGAM. March patiently along: let one be sent  
To pray Achilles see us at our tent.  
If in his death the gods have us befriended,  
Great Troy is ours, and our sharp wars are ended.      10  
*[Exeunt, marching.]*

### SCENE X—ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter ÆNEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, and DEIPHOBUS*

ÆNE. Stand, ho! yet are we masters of the field:  
Never go home; here starve we out the night.

*Enter TROILUS*

TRO. Hector is slain.

ALL.                                      Hector! The gods forbid!

TRO. He's dead; and at the murderer's horse's tail  
In beastly sort dragg'd through the shameful field.  
Frown on, you heavens, effect your rage with speed!  
Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy!  
I say, at once let your brief plagues be mercy,  
And linger not our sure destructions on!

ÆNE. My lord, you do discomfort all the host.      10

---

4 *bruit*] rumour, report.

SC. X, 7 *Sit, gods . . . smile at Troy*] Cf. *Psalms*, ii, 4: "He that sitteth  
in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision."

9 *linger not . . . on*] do not protract.

**SCENE X    TROILUS AND CRESSIDA**

[*Exeunt Æneas and Trojans.*

16 *screech-owl* The owl's screech was reckoned to proclaim evil tidings.

19 *Niobes*] Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 149: "Like *Niobe*, all tears." *Niobe* is the ordinary type of excessive weeping. Ovid tells her story in his *Metam.*, VI, 146-312.

24 *pight*] pitched: an archaic form.

25 *Titan*] the sun; a frequent usage.

31 *Hope of revenge . . . woe*] Some sagacious critics would end the piece here. Pandarus' epilogue is certainly contemptible. It would

*As TROILUS is going out, enter, from the other side, PANDARUS*

PAN. But hear you, hear you!

TRO. Hence, broker-lackey! ignomy and shame  
Pursue thy life, and live aye with thy name! [*Exit.*]

PAN. A goodly medicine for my aching bones!  
O world! world! world! thus is the poor agent despised!  
O traitors and bawds, how earnestly are you set a-work,  
and how ill requited! why should our endeavour be so  
loved and the performance so loathed? what verse for it?  
what instance for it? Let me see:

40

Full merrily the humble-bee doth sing,  
Till he hath lost his honey and his sting;  
And being once subdued in armed tail,  
Sweet honey and sweet notes together fail.

Good traders in the flesh, set this in your painted cloths:

As many as be here of Pandar's hall,  
Your eyes, half out, weep out at Pandar's fall;

---

almost seem too as if Pandarus' epilogue (lines 35-55), if it be retained at all, should be relegated, with the three lines preceding it (32-34, *But hear you . . . with thy name!*), to the end of Scene iii, *supra*. Those three lines are in the Folios inserted there and are repeated here. They are obviously not required in both places. They seem to be more appropriate in the earlier place.

33 *broker-lackey*] go-between.

*ignomy*] a common abbreviation of ignominy.

37 *O traitors and bawds*] W. J. Craig aptly suggested "*O traders and bawds.*" At line 45 the speaker apostrophises "*Good traders in the flesh,*" — a phrase which supports this emendation.

45 *painted cloths*] tapestries or wall-hangings ornamented with pictorial designs and illustrative moral or scriptural maxims.

## SCENE X TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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Or if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,  
Though not for me, yet for your aching bones.  
Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade, 50  
Some two months hence my will shall here be made:  
It should be now, but that my fear is this,  
Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss:  
Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases,  
And at that time bequeath you my diseases. [Exit.

- 
- 53 *Some galled goose of Winchester*] Some sufferer from venereal disease, whom my words gall. The disease was colloquially called "Winchester goose," because the quarter in Southwark, the chief haunt of London prostitutes, was the property of the see of Winchester.
- 54 *I'll sweat*] Sweating-baths played a chief part in the treatment of sufferers from venereal disease.



# OTHELLO

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY WILLIAM E. HENLEY  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY F. BRANGWYN

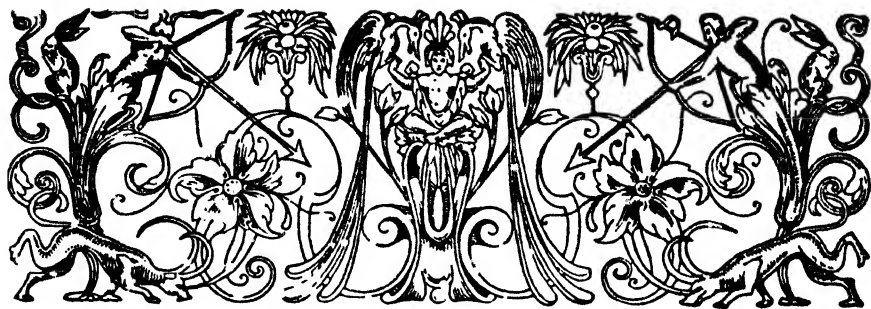


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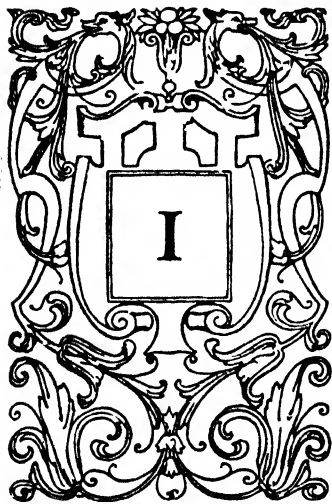






## INTRODUCTION

### I



IN 1622 "N. O." printed for Thomas Walkly: "and are to be sold at his Shop, at the Sign of the Eagle and Child, in Brittan's Bursse": the "Tragœdy of Othello the Moore of Venice," as it had been "divers times acted at the Globe and at the Black-Friars by his Maiestie's Servants." This is the first "Othello." "To commend it I will not," Walkly says; "for that which is good I hope every man will commend, without entreaty; and I am the bolder because the Author's name is sufficient to vent his work." Then, the year after (1623), came the First Folio; and in 1630 Walkly, who seems to have been in pocket by his earlier venture, published a Second Quarto. It is of no particular

## OTHELLO

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interest or importance: the text, as we have it, being Walkly *plus* Heminge and Condell, the First Quarto *plus* the First Folio. The latter version is longer than Walkly's by some hundred and fifty lines; but the Walkly, printed (Mr. Herford conjectures) "from an old copy of the play, as curtailed, and otherwise modified, for performance," is very much richer in "oaths and expletives" than the Heminge and Condell, and is therefore of respectable authority. As the first recorded performance of "Othello" is dated 1604: in the November of which year it was presented before the Court at Whitehall: and as the style, as befits the subject, is "simple, sensuous, and passionate" to the *n*<sup>th</sup> degree: a style with memories of "Hamlet," yet with scarce a foretaste of "Macbeth": it is assumed that 1604 was the birth-year of this unrivalled achievement in intimate, or domestic, drama, and that the text, as we have it, is very much the text that left Shakespeare's hand.

## II

The material is engagingly old and plain, at the same time that it is unalterably and essentially eternal. As stated by a critic of a day or two ago, a critic, by the way, of the same name as the "Moore's" first printer, it is simply the story of what your Modern Frenchman has elected to denote and to discriminate as *un crime occasionnel*. In Cinthio's "Hecatommithi," where Shakespeare found the raw suggestion of his mighty and magnificent presentation of jealousy: of jealousy, oo, in

## INTRODUCTION

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its operation on a mind which, rich in other sorts of experience, is, sexually speaking, next door to virginal: the passional crime is ever so much more persuasively paragraphed than it is in Mr. Walkley's amiable *boutade*; for in Cinthio the hero is not Othello (he is not so much, I believe, as named by name) but Iago, his Ensign, "in love with Desdemona."<sup>1</sup> To that fair and innocent creature Cinthio's Anticthio imparts the purpose of his passion; she understands him not; he instantly conceives her enamoured of the party we know as Michael Cassio. So he goes to work, corrupts the Moor, plots Desdemona's death, and the Lieutenant's; and, in the end, after sand-bagging the object of his passion into the other world in her husband's presence, pulling down the ceiling upon her broken body, and giving out that she has been killed by a fallen beam, turns on the Moor, accuses him of murder, gets him tortured and done to death, and, having thus justified his Renaissance habit, and purged himself of his *crime d'amour*, goes gallantly to justice on a different count, and accepts the sweet compulsion of the Rope for another crime. It is in this rather blackguard story of a blackguard lecher's disappointment and revenge that our Archimage discovered his "Othello." He astonishes always, when you come to look into his treatment of other men's material. His method is ever royal: he lays hands on what he wants, and the fact that he wants it makes it his, and none else's. I know not that, anywhere in his work, is there discovered so clear a proof of sovranty as here. Othello, Iago, Cassio,

<sup>1</sup> This is Cinthio's spelling of the Shakespearean Desdemona.

## OTHELLO

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Emilia, Desdemona — even the Handkerchief — all these figure in the twenty-seventh of the “Hecatommithi.” Yet to compare the *Novella* and the Play is to live in two worlds at once, and, so living, to be utterly and everlastingly cognisant of the inexpressible difference between creation as Cinthio understood and practised it, and creation as it was apprehended and done by William Shakespeare.

### III

In Cinthio's anecdote, or *compte-rendu*, the interest is almost wholly one of incident. The Novelist, or Reporter, is primarily concerned with — not character, nor action in its effect on character, but — action for its own sake, action as material for narrative. His Moor, his Lieutenant, his Desdemona, are counters all: such character-interest as he discovers is contained in his Antient; and he even is no more personal than any trim, literal incarnation of the clear-eyed, clean-minded, self-seeking, ruthless, self-sufficing scoundrelism of Cesare Borgia would be. Cinthio's Antient is wholly lacking in those touches of doubt, those instants of inquiry, those hints and flashes of internal conflict, those glimpses of desperate debate between Mind and Appetite, between Brain and Temperament, which lend so potent and so variable a magic to the portraiture of that strange, brilliant, evil-speaking, evil-thinking, evil-doing “demi-devil”: that parcel-tamed, over-civilised man-eating tiger, which we know as Iago. He is Cinthio's hero; but in Cinthio his psychology

## INTRODUCTION

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remains obscure : in fact, we know as much and as little of him as we know of the chief agent in any criminal affair which was reported yesterday. Stated in Police Court terms : he is a subaltern, who tries to lie with his General's wife ; failing in his intent, he gets jealous of an airy rival ; poisons his General's ear ; has the satisfaction of bruising the lady of his desire to death—as a positive confirmed whore too!—in the eye of him he'd 'ain have cuckolded ; experiences a wolfish joy in the death of that once potential horned beast ; and, in the end, is himself sent down to the Pit on quite other grounds than poor Desdemona's broken breast-bone and spine, and with never so much as a memory or a thought of the cuckold that was not to be, whom he had escorted to the bounds of Space and Time with every circumstance of miserableness and hate. That is pretty much as he half-exists in the "Hecatomithi" : for the simple reason that Cinthio, having made him play his part, with supreme success, in the affairs of Desdemona and the Moor, as a good enough Renaissance Italian, a Cesare Borgia on the smallest scale, was content to ask no more of him, but to let him end even as, in an enlightened Italy, such small change of Machiavelli's ideal Prince might end, and very often did. In "Othello" all this is changed : Iago quits the Police-Court (so to say) for the purlieus of Humanity, and, instead of depending for immortality on the word of a mere reporter, is taken up, and shaken, and squeezed, and made to know something of himself, and to make that much of himself he knows, and a great deal besides, intelligible to others,

## OTHELLO

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by the greatest *manieur d'hommes* that ever lived. The result is such an exemplary presentation of active, motiveless, and militant wickedness as Balzac, say — the Balzac of Philippe Bridau and Cousin Betty — has not so much as approached.

### IV

Is it quite made out? I am reluctant to determine. I think it is; but I have to admit that, if it be, the achievement is accomplished largely by means of soliloquy: an expedient in dramatic art abominable to the play-going mind. Yet was it a common device with Shakespeare, to whom its practice saved much trouble: nay, made things possible which in its absence could not have been essayed. Accepting it for the compromise it is, you may say, I think, that, thanks to its use, Iago is entirely credible. Despite the majestic assurance and completeness of his presentment as a chief actor in the play, we should not know him as we do if we were denied the privilege of sitting with him in the privy chamber of his thought, and taking our fill, and more, of those terrible mental practices by which he seeks, in the dry light of an excellent and daring intelligence, to reconcile his action with his conscience, his processes with his results, and, half in earnest, half in jest, as it were to excuse himself before his soul. He is a piece of pure intellect: he has gaiety, wit, invention, a kind of lethal humour; he is versed in "politic authors," and, besides, he is deeply read in the books of Character

## INTRODUCTION

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and Life, so that he "knows all qualities of human dealing with a most learned spirit"; he discovers in himself a fine observer, a shrewd and gluttonous critic; first and last he is high in resolve, cruel of heart, swift and resolute of hand; in speech he is liberal to the point of intemperance, with an odd trick of obscenity, whether suggested or phrased, which he has practised till it has mastered him, and in which the World, if it were but wise, would find proof indubitable of the inherent baseness of his mind. Said a fine critic to me long years ago, in the great Salvini times: "You may meet Iago on any Yorkshire race-course"; and, the inevitable mutations duly made, I take the remark to be intrinsically just. Palmer of Rugely, the poisoning creature, was of Iago's type and strain; and the Ring breeds many such potential beasts of prey. These are the men who kill, and are half surprised and half angered to find, as they generally do, that Killing is called *Murder*, is an offence before the Law, and must be expiated on the Gallows. These wretches play with Evil much as a young man plays with Life; and are just as sorry for themselves when they come to the unchanging end.

For the rest, Iago, like his kind at large, is wholly the creature of the Event he quickens and stage-manages. He gulls Roderigo, he gulls Cassio, he gulls Othello into killing Desdemona, and essaying to compass his Lieutenant's murder. But, though he never so much as suspect it, the mortal issue he has made imminent masters him ever, and, being determined, leaves him the most wretched slave this side Eternity. He starts by "guying"



## OTHELLO

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an aged and respectable Senator on a most delicate and peculiar point of honour, in terms so rank that Shakespeare himself, good as he was at filth (and none better ever lived), has not improved on them; he ends as the murderer whole or parcel-gilt of Othello, Desdemona, Roderigo, and Emilia, with a bad wound in his body, the assurance of being done to death by torture (not that he would care much for that), and the knowledge that, thanks to him, the Cassio he so wretchedly loathed and scorned is Governor of Cyprus. For all his vocabulary and for all his brains, his contempt for elementary human law is ever too strong for him. He makes the best of circumstances that he can; he wins his points; he is always alert, maleficent, superior to his opportunity; and in the long run he is found to be merely the peer of the Hogarthian Thomas Idle.

### V

But, to make a play, it is not enough to present Intelligence at odds with Morals. For, as was long since pointed out to me by my dear friend Fleeming Jenkin, the staple of Drama is Emotion. "You must have Incident," he argued, in his fine, logical way, "or your Emotion will not be Strong; you must have Character, or it will not be Interesting; you must have Style, or your presentation of it, whatever it be, will not be Literature." But, if you lacked all these (the contention was) you might stagger through, and grip your audience, and

## INTRODUCTION

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achieve your end, if only you had Emotion. Dumas père, though Jenkin knew it not, had said the same thing years before. There was an essential difference, he remarked, between himself and Hugo, "*le Penseur*" (so the loyal old Artist called the greatest Liar in all Drama), and the difference consisted in this : Hugo could do nothing in the play-writing way without what one may call the fripperies of drama—Horns of *Hernani*, Tombs of *Charlemagne*, "*Soupers à Ferrare*," Choruses of Monks, Coffins, Thunder and Lightning, Ruined Castles, and the like ; whereas all *he* wanted was "four trestles, four boards, two actors, and a passion." 'Tis the briefest, the most comprehensive, the most luminous statement of the essentials of drama that ever, I believe, was made ; and it fits the "*Othello*" of Shakespeare as it fits the *Æschylean* "*Oresteia*," like a glove.

Scene by scene and act by act, the "*Moor of Venice*" moves with an irresistible stride to an inevitable end ; 'tis a lasting and affecting proof, if any proof were needed, that the "well-made play" did not begin with "*Antony*" and "*la Tour de Nesle*"; it shows that the Sardou formula and the Ibsen formula are mere matters of to-day, and that here at least is a point at which the Sophocles of the "*Œdipus*" might take hands with Shakespeare, and own that, his own masterpiece, all radiant and serene as it appears, is no greater nor more splendid an achievement in design, in construction, in effect, than this. This is another way of saying that, Iago apart, the interest of "*Othello*" is entirely and unalterably emotional. You might play it in a barn, and it would still fulfil it—

## OTHELLO

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self; for the singular reason that here, wherever you look, are old Dumas' "two actors and a passion," and that what Jenkin called "emotion" is never absent. The actors change: are now Othello and Iago, now Desdemona and Emilia, now Othello and Desdemona, now Emilia and Othello, now Othello and Fate, the tremendous, the inevitable: even Death. But the passion persists: it shifts its quality as the Master wills, takes on the hues, speaks with the voice, dares with the furiousness of love, and hate, and jealousy, and misery and murder and despair. But, once evoked, it never lets go of your throat; and this is what makes "Othello" the play of plays it is. I think that "Lear" is bigger, as being more elemental (let us say); I think that "Hamlet" is certainly more subtle, more engaging, more romantic; I think that in "Measure for Measure" and "Macbeth": perhaps, too, in "Troilus," and in "Antony and Cleopatra," with its elderly lovers kissing and dying against a background of ruining Empire and a changing world: we get more of such vital and undisguisable essentials as went to the making of our Prospero-Proteus, our Man of Men, our Chief of Poets. But nowhere in his achievement has he discovered a greater capacity, a clearer insight, a more assured and royal method, than here. Of course, he plundered Cinthio; but who was Cinthio that he should not be plundered? And of what effect were Cinthio now — he, and his Antient, and his Lieutenant, his "Moore," and his Desdemona — had he not been translated, and glorified, and eternised in terms of very Shakespeare?

## INTRODUCTION

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### VI

Tragedy is an abstraction of life at its quintessential points: its passages of high-climbing, inoubliable, annihilating rapture; its supreme moments of envy, hate, wrath, misery, suspicion, lust, despair. And Shakespeare, the great "Abstractor of Quintessences," accomplished no more splendidly difficult task in all the years of his tremendous and triumphing achievement than when he made his Moor, not merely plausible, but entirely human and credible. It has been, and perhaps still is, objected to this august and immortal thing, that Othello is too "easily moved": that his ear is too wide, that is, his mind too prompt, his heart too eager to entertain suspicion; and that he is so readily satisfied in the matter of proof that he might give points to such typical exemplars of horndom as Arnolphe in "l'École des femmes" and the Sganarelle of "le Cocu imaginaire." These objections have, of course, been traversed, and traversed to so complete a purpose that I note them only for the form's sake, and with never a thought of going back on them. 'Tis enough to note that Tragedy, being a quintessentialised abstraction of life in its most desperate potentialities, has its own convention, and is governed by none but its own rules, and that to begin upon the examination of an exemplary piece of tragedy by questioning the propriety of that convention were to make Criticism impossible. To accept the Tragic Convention is to find the character of Othello an

## OTHELLO

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“entire and perfect chrysolite” among creations: an achievement in presentation which Shakespeare himself has not surpassed; a study in passion-wrought character in which the last is said. ’Tis as it were a soul in earthquake and eclipse; and there is never a detail, never a touch of the cataclysm, however variable and minute, but is realised and recorded with so consummate an artistry, an intelligence so abounding, so complete, and so assured, that the issue savours of inspiration.

### VII

It is history that J.-B. Poquelin, called Molière, wrote for his company, and that, cutting his parts to his actors and actresses much as a modern snip cuts you his “tailor-mades” and his “suits” to the physical idiosyncrasies of his customers, female and male, succeeded, being an accomplished and very admirable master in this sort of sartorials, not only in fitting his customers but, also, in founding and establishing a tradition: a tradition, too, of such comprehensive and enduring potency that, in its shadow, Coquelin *ainé* plays Scapin much as Molière played Scapin, while Agnès (say) and Horace are to this day presented in the same terms, on the same level, so far as is possible in the same spirit, as were imposed by J.-B. Poquelin on le Sieur Lagrange and on that brilliant and beautiful Mlle. de Brie, of whom ’tis told that, at sixty, she was still the best Agnès of them

## INTRODUCTION

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all. Now, Molière was the greatest Actor-Manager<sup>1</sup> that ever lived; but it is obvious that Shakespeare, being a person of (shall I say?) considerable intelligence, anticipated him in this matter, and, having a great actor, Burbage to wit, in his company, wrote as carefully and as joyously for him as, long years after, le Sieur Poquelin wrote for Molière and Lagrange and de Brie. I would go so far as to say that had Dick Burbage — a Stratford man, too! — been of another temperament than he was, and lacked the strange, romantic, passionate face he had, there had been differences in Richard, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, as we have them, and that they who would fain present the dramatist from his plays would do well to look carefully and keenly into the intellectual and emotional quality of his chief of actors. But such argument is not for here nor now; and I end with this reflection: "This afternoon, at the Globe Theatre, First Performance of 'Othello, the Moore of Venice'; Othello, Master Richard Burbadge." *Othello?* with Burbage "up," and Shakespeare prompting him from the wings? What a *première*!

W. E. HENLEY.

<sup>1</sup> That he wrote his best for himself and his temporary woman, or "leading lady," is but to say that he was a Manager-Actor in the fullest sense of the term.



# OTHELLO



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

DUKE OF VENICE.

BRABANTIO, a senator.

Other Senators.

GRATIANO, brother to Brabantio.

LODOVICO, kinsman to Brabantio.

OTHELLO, a noble Moor in the service of the Venetian state.

CASSIO, his lieutenant.

IAGO, his ancient.

RODERIGO, a Venetian gentleman.

MONTANO, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus.

Clown, servant to Othello.

DESDEMONA, daughter to Brabantio and wife to Othello.

EMILIA, wife to Iago.

BIANCA, mistress to Cassio.

Sailor, Messenger, Herald, Officers, Gentlemen, Musicians, and  
Attendants.

SCENE: *Venice: a seaport in Cyprus*

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<sup>1</sup> This piece was first printed in 1622 in a quarto volume which was reissued in 1630: A better and fuller text appeared in the First Folio of 1623. Acts and Scenes are indicated in the First Folio, and a list of "The Names of the Actors" is put at the end. The First Quarto has no such list, and the only notes of scenic subdivisions there are prefixed to Acts II, IV, and V, which are introduced respectively with the words *Actus 2*, *Scena 1*, *Actus 4*, and *Actus 5*.

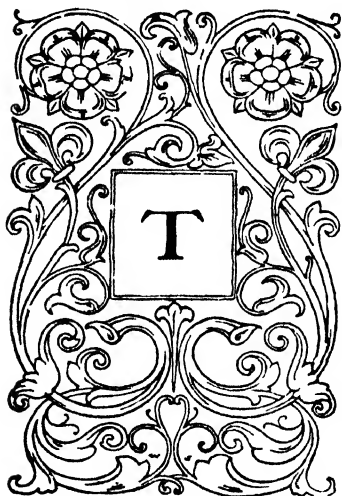


ACT FIRST — SCENE I — VENICE

A STREET

*Enter RODERIGO and IAGO*

RODERIGO



TUSH, NEVER TELL ME; I  
take it much unkindly  
That thou, Iago, who hast had  
my purse  
As if the strings were thine,  
shouldst know of this.

IAGO. 'Sblood, but you will  
not hear me:  
If ever I did dream of such a  
matter,  
Abhor me.

ROD. Thou told'st me thou  
didst hold him in thy hate.

IAGO. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of  
the city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,

<sup>1</sup> *Tush, never tell me*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios omit *Tush*. Roderigo is impatiently rebuking Iago's protestations, that he was ignorant of Roderigo's love for Desdemona. The dialogue, which is

Off-capp'd to him: and, by the faith of man, 10  
 I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:  
 But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,  
 Evades them, with a bombast circumstance  
 Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;  
 And, in conclusion,  
 Nonsuits my mediators; for, "Certes," says he,  
 "I have already chose my officer."  
 And what was he?  
 Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine, 20  
 A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;

---

under weigh before the scene opens, deals with the first news of Othello's elopement with Desdemona, which Iago has just communicated to Roderigo.

3 *know of this*] know, without revealing to the speaker, the understanding between Othello and Desdemona.

10 *Off-capp'd to*] Stood cap in hand soliciting.

13 *with a bombast circumstance*] with inflated circumlocution.

16 "*Certes*"] Certainly, assuredly.

19-20 *arithmetician . . . Florentine*] one only fit for dealing with figures on paper, a man suited to the vocation of a city clerk, able to add and subtract. Cassio as a Florentine might be credited with quickness at figures and bookkeeping, a characteristic of the Florentines' traditional absorption in commerce. Cf. line 31, *infra*. Arithmetical faculty might, too, be well ascribed to a soldier who had only learnt the art of war in books of strategy, which commonly abounded in statistical tables. Cf. line 24, *infra*, "bookish theoric."

21 *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*] Thus the early editions. The reading is difficult, and many changes have been suggested, but none are quite convincing. Cassio is a bachelor; but at Act IV, Sc. i, Iago banters him with the report that he is intending to marry the courtesan Blanca. Iago may imply sneeringly here that Cassio is on the point of

That never set a squadron in the field,  
 Nor the division of a battle knows  
 More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,  
 Wherein the toged consuls can propose  
 As masterly as he: mere prattle without practice  
 Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election:  
 And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof  
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds  
 Christian and heathen, must be be-lee'd and calm'd 30  
 By debtor and creditor: this counter-caster,  
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,  
 And I — God bless the mark! — his Moorship's ancient.

coming to grief, of challenging damnation by making the beautiful prostitute his wife. Iago has a cynical suspicion of his own wife's fidelity (see I, iii, 381-382; II, i, 289-293; IV, ii, 148, *infra*), and is inclined to regard damnation as the common fate of all husbands of beautiful women.

23 *the division of a battle*] the disposition of a battalion.

24 *theoric*] theory. Cf. *All's Well*, IV, iii, 135: "*theoric* of war."

25 *toged*] Thus the First Quarto. All other early editions read less pointedly *tongued*, i. e., garrulous, talkative. *Toged* means wearing the "toga," the uniform of civil officers of state as opposed to military officers. "Consuls" merely means councillors or senators, as in I, ii, 43, *infra*. *propose*] talk.

30 *be-lee'd*] under the lee of another, out of the way of the wind, and so becalmed (as of a ship).

31 *By debtor and creditor*] By a mere bookkeeper, and ready-reckoner. *counter-caster*] one who casts up counters; an old method of accountancy. Cf. line 19, *supra*, "arithmetician."

32 *in good time*] used ironically like the French "*à la bonne heure*," i. e., "forsooth," "good luck."

33 *God bless the mark!*] God avert the omen!  
*ancient*] a colloquial mispronunciation of "ensign."

# OTHELLO

ACT I

ROD. By heaven, I rather would have been his hang-  
man.

IAGO. Why, there 's no remedy; 't is the curse of  
service,

Preferment goes by letter and affection,  
And not by old gradation, where each second  
Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself  
Whether I in any just term am affined  
To love the Moor.

ROD. I would not follow him then. 40

IAGO. O, sir, content you;  
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:  
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters  
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark  
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,  
That doting on his own obsequious bondage  
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,  
For nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd:  
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are  
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty, 50  
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,  
And throwing but shows of service on their lords  
Do well thrive by them, and when they have lined their  
coats  
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul,  
And such a one do I profess myself.

36 *by letter and affection*] by commendatory testimonial and favouritism.

39 *I . . . affined*] I am bound in any such close terms of affinity or kin-  
ship as.

49 *honest knaves*] honest fellows.

50 *trimm'd . . . visages*] decked out in the outward forms and semblances.

For, sir,

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,  
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:  
In following him, I follow but myself;  
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty, 60  
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:  
For when my outward action doth demonstrate  
The native act and figure of my heart  
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after  
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve  
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

ROD. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,  
If he can carry 't thus!

IAGO. Call up her father,  
Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,  
Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen, 70  
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,  
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,

58 *I would not be Iago*] Either "I should not be my servile self," or preferably "there would be no need for me to play this malicious rôle."

64 *In compliment extern*] In external etiquette or behaviour; Rowe's correction of the original reading *complement* [*i. e.*, accomplishment] *extern*.

65 *I will wear . . . upon my sleeve*] Men of fashion wore their mistresses' favours or tokens pinned to their sleeve.

66 *I am not what I am*] I am concealing my true character, I am not what I seem to others to be.

67-68 *What . . . carry 't thus*] What a fulness of luck does the nigger enjoy or possess, if he can succeed in a matter of this sort. "Thick-lips," which were dominant features of negroes, was an expression only applicable by way of abuse to a smooth-lipped Moor.

72 *Plague him with flies*] The speaker has in mind the noisome activity of insect pests in barren sandy regions.

Yet throw such changes of vexation on 't  
As it may lose some colour.

ROD. Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

IAGO. Do; with like timorous accent and dire yell  
As when, by night and negligence, the fire  
Is spied in populous cities.

ROD. What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

IAGO. Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves! thieves!  
thieves!

80

Look to your house, your daughter and your bags!  
Thieves! thieves!

*BRABANTIO appears above, at a window*

BRA. What is the reason of this terrible summons?  
What is the matter there?

ROD. Signior, is all your family within?

IAGO. Are your doors lock'd?

BRA. Why, wherefore ask you this?

IAGO. 'Zounds, sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on  
your gown;

Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram

Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise;

90

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:

Arise, I say.

---

73 *changes*] alternations. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *chances*,  
i. e., damaging accidents.

77 *by night and negligence*] at night and through negligence, or as a result  
of carelessness.

BRA. What, have you lost your wits?

ROD. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

BRA. Not I: what are you?

ROD. My name is Roderigo.

BRA. The worser welcome:  
I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors:  
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say  
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,  
Being full of supper and distempering draughts, 100  
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come  
To start my quiet.

ROD Sir, sir, sir, —

BRA. But thou must needs be sure  
My spirit and my place have in them power  
To make this bitter to thee.

ROD. Patience, good sir.

BRA. What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;  
My house is not a grange.

ROD. Most grave Brabantio,  
In simple and pure soul I come to you. 108

IAGO. 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not  
serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do  
you service and you think we are ruffians, you'll have  
your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you'll

---

100 *distempering draughts*] intoxicating liquors.

101 *Upon malicious bravery*] Out of malicious bravado and bluster. Thus the Quartos.

107 *a grange*] a secluded farm-house in the open country.

108 *In simple and pure soul*] With absolute honesty of purpose.



have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans.

BRA. What profane wretch art thou?

IAGO. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

BRA. Thou art a villain.

IAGO. You are — a senator.

BRA. This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

ROD. Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech  
you,

121

If 't be your pleasure and most wise consent,  
As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter,  
At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night,  
Transported with no worse nor better guard  
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,  
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor, —  
If this be known to you, and your allowance,  
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;  
But if you know not this, my manners tell me  
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe

130

113 *nephews*] grandsons.

114 *gennets for germans*] (small Spanish) horses for kinsmen.

115 *profane*] blasphemous.

124 *At this odd-even . . . o' the night*] At the midmost period of the night, between 12 P. M. and 1 A. M., when night, as in *Macb.*, III, iv, 127, is "at odds with morning."

125 *Transported*] Has been or was transported. The verb in the sentence is incomplete.

128 *and your allowance*] and (has) your approval.

131 *We have your wrong rebuke*] You rebuke us unjustly.

That, from the sense of all civility,  
 I thus would play and trifle with your reverence:  
 Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,  
 I say again, hath made a gross revolt,  
 Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes,  
 In an extravagant and wheeling stranger  
 Of here and every where. Straight satisfy yourself:  
 If she be in her chamber or your house,  
 Let loose on me the justice of the state  
 For thus deluding you. 140

BRA. Strike on the tinder, ho!  
 Give me a taper! call up all my people!  
 This accident is not unlike my dream:  
 Belief of it oppresses me already.  
 Light, I say! light! [Exit above.]

IAGO. Farewell; for I must leave you:  
 It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,  
 To be produced — as, if I stay, I shall —  
 Against the Moor: for I do know, the state,  
 However this may gall him with some check,  
 Cannot with safety cast him; for he's embark'd 150  
 With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,  
 Which even now stand in act, that, for their souls,  
 Another of his fathom they have none

132 *from the sense*] contrary to the intention.

137-138 *In an extravagant . . . every where*] To a vagabond and roving foreigner belonging to this and every country.

149 *check*] rebuke.

150 *cast*] dismiss, reject. Cf. V, ii, 330, *infra*.

153 *fathom*] capacity.

To lead their business: in which regard,  
 Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,  
 Yet for necessity of present life,  
 I must show out a flag and sign of love,  
 Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find  
                   him,  
 Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;  
 And there will I be with him. So farewell. [Exit. 160

*Enter, below, BRABANTIO, in his night-gown, and Servants  
 with torches*

BRA. It is too true an evil: gone she is;  
 And what's to come of my despised time  
 Is nought but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,  
 Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!  
 With the Moor, say'st thou? Who would be a father!  
 How didst thou know 't was she? O, she deceives me  
 Past thought! What said she to you? Get more tapers.  
 Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?  
 ROD. Truly, I think they are.

154 *in which regard*] on which account.

159 *the Sagittary*] probably intended for the name of a well-known inn,  
 which bore as its sign a picture of the Archer of the Zodiac. The  
 "Centaur" is similarly mentioned in *Com. of Errors*, I, ii, 9 *et passim*,  
 and "the Pegasus" in *T. of Shrew*, IV, iv, 5. There seems no ground  
 for the suggestion frequently made by commentators on this line that  
 the arsenal of Venice was called by this name.  
*the raised search*] the hue and cry.

162 *my despised time*] According to Johnson "time of no value." The  
 notion seems to be that for the rest of Brabantio's life he will be an  
 object of contempt.

BRA. O heaven! How got she out? O treason of  
the blood! 170

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds  
By what you see them act. Is there not charms  
By which the property of youth and maidhood  
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,  
Of some such thing?

ROD. Yes, sir, I have indeed.

BRA. Call up my brother. O, would you had had her!  
Some one way, some another. Do you know  
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

ROD. I think I can discover him, if you please  
To get good guard and go along with me. 180

BRA. Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;  
I may command at most. Get weapons, ho!  
And raise some special officers of night.  
On, good Roderigo; I'll deserve your pains. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II—ANOTHER STREET

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants with torches*

IAGO. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,  
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience

---

173 *the property of*] the innocence appertaining to.

174 *abused*] deceived, deluded.

182 *I may command at most*] My word is law at most houses.

183 *of night*] Thus the First Quarto. All other early editions read *of*  
*might.*

2 *very stuff*] essence.

## ACT I

OTH. 'T is better as it is.

10

OTH. Let him do his spite:

20

The Quartos read *jerk'd*.

24

44 *a voice potential . . . duke's]* a voice of powerful influence quite as extensive as the duke's. "Double" often means "exceptionally strong," as "single" often means "exceptionally weak."

[ 14 ]

I shall promulgate — I fetch my life and being  
 From men of royal siege, and my demerits  
 May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
 As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,  
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
 I would not my unhoused free condition  
 Put into circumscription and confine  
 For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come  
 yond?

IAGO. Those are the raised father and his friends:  
 You were best go in.

OTH. Not I; I must be found: 30  
 My parts, my title and my perfect soul,  
 Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

IAGO. By Janus, I think no.

22 *siege*] rank. "Siege" often means "seat" or "throne."

*demerits*] "deserts," "merits," as in the classical Latin "*demereo*."

23 *unbonneted*] This must mean "with the cap off," "without any concealment." Othello points out that his merits may openly and undisguisedly address on even terms (or rank with) a station in life as eminent as that to which his marriage conducts him. The suggestion of obeisance which often attaches to "unbonneted" does not belong to the word here.

26 *unhoused*] undomesticated, without household cares.

27 *circumscription and confine*] circumscribed limits.

28 *the sea's worth*] Cf. *Sonnet* xxi, 6, "sea's rich gems."

29 *raised*] summoned. Cf. I, i, 159, *supra*, "the raised search," and I, i, 183, "raise some special officers."

31 *My parts . . . my perfect soul*] My endowments or gifts . . . my spotless conscience.

33 *By Janus*] Iago appropriately swears by the double-faced god.

*Enter CASSIO, and certain Officers with torches*

OTH. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.  
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!  
What is the news?

CAS. The duke does greet you, general,  
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,  
Even on the instant.

OTH. What is the matter, think you?

CAS. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine:  
It is a business of some heat: the galleys 40  
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers  
This very night at one another's heels;  
And many of the consuls, raised and met,  
Are at the duke's already: you have been hotly call'd  
for;

When, being not at your lodging to be found,  
The senate hath sent about three several quests  
To search you out.

OTH. 'T is well I am found by you.  
I will but spend a word here in the house,  
And go with you. [Exit.

CAS. Ancient, what makes he here?

IAGO. Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack:  
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever. 51

35 *The goodness . . . upon you*] Good night to you!

41 *sequent*] following one another, one after the other.

43 *consuls*] councillors. Cf. I, i, 25, *supra*, "toged *consuls*."

46 *about*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *above*.

*quests*] search parties.

50 *a land carack*] a ship of great burden on land.

CAS. I do not understand.

IAGO. He's married.

CAS. To who?

*Re-enter OTHELLO*

IAGO. Marry, to — Come, captain, will you go?

OTH. Have with you.

CAS. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

IAGO. It is Brabantio: general, be advised;  
He comes to bad intent.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers with torches and  
weapons*

OTH. Holla! stand there!

ROD. Signior, it is the Moor.

BRA. Down with him, thief!

*[They draw on both sides.]*

IAGO. You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.

OTH. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will  
rust them.

Good signior, you shall more command with years 60  
Than with your weapons.

BRA. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my  
daughter?

---

52 *To who?*] Cassio's ignorance is affected. Cf. III, iii, 97, where Othello asserts that Cassio knew his relations with Desdemona "from first to last."

53 *Have with you*] I am quite ready.

55 *be advised*] be careful.



Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;  
 For I'll refer me to all things of sense,  
 If she in chains of magic were not bound,  
 Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,  
 So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd  
 The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,  
 Would ever have, to incur a general mock,  
 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom  
 Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight.  
 Judge me the world, if 't is not gross in sense  
 That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,  
 Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals  
 That weaken motion: I'll have't disputed on;  
 'T is probable, and palpable to thinking.  
 I therefore apprehend and do attach thee  
 For an abuser of the world, a practiser  
 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.

70

65 *If . . . bound*] The First Quarto omits this line.

68 *curled darlings*] pretty fops, who were wont to curl their hair. Cf. *Ant.* and *Cleop.*, V, ii, 299, "the *curled* Antony."

70 *guardage*] guardianship.

71 *a thing . . . to fear, not to delight*] a thing . . . to cause fear, not to give delight.

72-77 *Judge . . . thee*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

72 *Judge . . . gross in sense*] Let the world judge for me, if it is not obvious to any understanding. Cf. 76, *infra*, "palpable to thinking."

75 *weaken motion*] impair the faculties. Hammer needlessly suggested *waken motion*, i. e., waken the sensual impulse, although "motion" often has the latter sense. Cf. I, iii, 95, *infra*.

77 *attach*] arrest.

78 *an abuser of the world*] a proclaimed cheat.

79 *inhibited . . . warrant*] prohibited and unauthorised.

Lay hold upon him: if he do resist,  
Subdue him at his peril.

OTH. Hold your hands,  
Both you of my inclining and the rest:  
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
Without a prompter. Where will you that I go  
To answer this your charge?

BRA. To prison, till fit time  
Of law and course of direct session  
Call thee to answer.

OTH. What if I do obey?  
How may the duke be therewith satisfied,  
Whose messengers are here about my side,  
Upon some present business of the state  
To bring me to him?

FIRST OFF. 'T is true, most worthy signior;  
The duke's in council, and your noble self,  
I am sure, is sent for.

BRA. How! the duke in council!  
In this time of the night! Bring him away:  
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,  
Or any of my brothers of the state,  
Cannot but feel this wrong as 't were their own;  
For if such actions may have passage free,  
Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be. [*Exeunt.*]

---

82 *of my inclining*] of those inclined to side with me.

86 *course of direct session*] regular process of judicial procedure.

99 *pagans*] lawless savages.

## SCENE III — A COUNCIL-CHAMBER

*The Duke and Senators sitting at a table; Officers attending*

DUKE. There is no composition in these news  
That gives them credit.

FIRST SEN. Indeed they are disproportion'd;  
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

DUKE. And mine, a hundred and forty.

SEC. SEN. And mine, two hundred:  
But though they jump not on a just account, —  
As in these cases, where the aim reports,  
'T is oft with difference, — yet do they all confirm  
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

DUKE. Nay, it is possible enough to judgement:  
I do not so secure me in the error,  
But the main article I do approve  
In fearful sense.

10

SAILOR. [*Within*] What, ho! what, ho! what, ho!

FIRST OFF. A messenger from the galleys.

1 *composition*] consistency, coherence.

5 *jump not . . . account*] agree not in an exact estimate.

6 *the aim reports*] guess or conjecture brings the news.

8 *A Turkish fleet . . . Cyprus*] Cyprus was under the dominion of the Venetian republic from 1489 till 1571, when it was captured by the Turkish fleet.

10-12 *I do not so secure . . . fearful sense*] I do not attach so much importance to the discrepancy as not to admit the substantial accuracy of the intelligence in its sense of giving ground for alarm.

*Enter Sailor*

DUKE. Now, what's the business?

SAIL. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;  
So was I bid report here to the state  
By Signior Angelo.

DUKE. How say you by this change?

FIRST SEN. This cannot be,  
By no assay of reason: 't is a pageant  
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider  
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk, 20  
And let ourselves again but understand  
That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,  
So may he with more facile question bear it,  
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,  
But altogether lacks the abilities  
That Rhodes is dress'd in: if we make thought of this,  
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful  
To leave that latest which concerns him first,  
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,  
To wake and wage a danger profitless. 30

DUKE. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

FIRST OFF. Here is more news.

---

14 *preparation*] force ready for action. Cf. line 221, *infra*.

17 *How . . . change ?*] What do you make of this change?

18 *assay*] test.

23 *with more facile question bear it*] with less opposition contest it.

24-30 *For that . . . profitless*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

24 *brace*] state of defence.

30 *wake and wage*] excite and challenge.

*Enter a Messenger*

MESS. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,  
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,  
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.

FIRST SEN. Ay, so I thought. How many, as you  
guess?

MESS. Of thirty sail: and now they do re-stem  
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance  
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,  
Your trusty and most valiant servitor, 40  
With his free duty recommends you thus,  
And prays you to believe him.

DUKE. 'T is certain then for Cyprus.  
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

FIRST SEN. He's now in Florence.

DUKE. Write from us to him; post-post-haste  
dispatch.

FIRST SEN. Here comes Brabantio and the valiant  
Moor.

*Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Officers*

DUKE. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you  
Against the general enemy Ottoman.

[*To Brabantio*] I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior; 50  
We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

33 *The Ottomites*] The Ottomans, the Turks.

35 *injointed them*] joined their forces, combined.

36 *Ay, so I . . . guess?*] The First Quarto omits this line.

44 *Marcus Luccicos*] apparently a prominent Greek of Cyprus, who was  
known to be visiting Italy. He is mentioned nowhere else.

46 *to him*] The First Quarto reads *wish him*, i. e., desire him to come.

BRA. So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;  
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business  
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general  
Care

Take hold on me; for my particular grief  
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature  
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows,  
And it is stil' itself.

DUKE.               Why, what's the matter?

BRA. My daughter! O, my daughter!

ALL. Dead?

E<sub>R</sub>A.                      Ay, to me;

She is abused, stol'n from me and corrupted  
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;  
For nature so preposterously to err,  
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,  
Sans witchcraft could not.

DUKE. Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding  
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself  
And you of her, the bloody book of law  
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter  
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son  
Stood in your action.

BRA. Humbly I thank your grace. 70  
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,

56 *flood-gate*] like a torrent rushing through a sluice.

67-69 *the bloody . . . sense*] the stringent statute appointing condign punishment shall be applied to the letter, in accord with your own interpretation.

69-70 *though . . . action*] though our own son should be defendant in  
your action.

Your special mandate for the state-affairs  
Hath hither brought.

ALL. We are very sorry for 't.

DUKE. [*To Othello*] What in your own part can you  
say to this?

BRA. Nothing, but this is so.

OTH. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
My very noble and approved good masters,  
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter  
It is most true; true, I have married her:  
The very head and front of my offending 80  
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,  
And little blest with the soft phrase of peace;  
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,  
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used  
Their dearest action in the tented field;  
And little of this great world can I speak,  
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;  
And therefore little shall I grace my cause  
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,  
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver 90  
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,  
What conjuration and what mighty magic —  
For such proceeding I am charged withal —  
I won his daughter.

BRA. A maiden never bold;

77 *approved good masters*] tried patrons.

84 *some nine moons wasted*] save for nine months, wasted in unemployment.

85 *dearest*] chief, most important.

90 *round*] plain, direct.

Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion  
 Blush'd at herself; and she -- in spite of nature,  
 Of years, of country, credit, every thing --  
 To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!  
 It is a judgement maim'd and most imperfect,  
 That will confess perfection so could err 100  
 Against all rules of nature; and must be driven  
 To find out practices of cunning hell,  
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,  
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,  
 Or with some dram conjured to this effect,  
 He wrought upon her.

DUKE. To vouch this, is no proof,  
 Without more certain and more overt test  
 Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods  
 Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

FIRST SEN. But, Othello, speak: 110  
 Did you by indirect and forced courses  
 Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?  
 Or came it by request, and such fair question  
 As soul to soul affordeth?

OTH. I do beseech you,  
 Send for the lady to the Sagittary,

---

95-96 *her motion . . . herself*] any sensual impulse of her spirit caused blushing. "Motion" is thus used elsewhere. Cf. note on I, ii, 75, *supra*. "Her," "herself" both refer to Desdemona's spirit. The "spirit" or "soul" is usually reckoned feminine.

108-109 *thin habits . . . modern seeming*] superficial semblances and insubstantial conjectures of trivial appearance. "Modern" is frequently used by Shakespeare for trivial or commonplace. Cf. *As you like it*, II, vii, 156: "wise saws and *modern* instances."



And let her speak of me before her father:  
If you do find me foul in her report,  
The trust, the office I do hold of you,  
Not only take away, but let your sentence  
Even fall upon my life.

DUKE. Fetch Desdemona hither. 120

OTH. Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.  
[*Exeunt Iago and Attendants.*]

And till she come, as truly as to heaven  
I do confess the vices of my blood,  
So justly to your grave ears I'll present  
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love  
And she in mine.

DUKE. Say it, Othello.

OTH. Her father loved me, oft invited me,  
Still question'd me the story of my life  
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes, 130  
That I have pass'd.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it:  
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe,  
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence,  
And portance in my travels' history:

---

139 *portance . . . history*] Thus substantially the Second Quarto. The First Quarto has the variation *with it all my for portance in my*, while the Folios substitute *Travellers for travels*'. "Portance" means de-  
portment, carriage.

Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle, 140  
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch  
 heaven,

It was my hint to speak, — such was the process;  
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
 Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear  
 Would Desdemona seriously incline:  
 But still the house affairs would draw her thence;  
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear 150  
 Devour up my discourse: which I observing,  
 Took once a pliant hour, and found good means  
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart  
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
 But not intently: I did consent,  
 And often did beguile her of her tears  
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
 That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,

140 *antres*] caves or caverns; a French word, not found elsewhere.

144-145 *men whose heads . . . shoulders*] Cf. Raleigh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, 1596, where a nation of people whose "heades appeare not above their shoulders" is allotted by Raleigh to a region of South America on hearsay evidence, which he is inclined to credit.

146 *incline*] *sc.* her ear.

151 *a pliant hour*] a suitable hour.

153 *dilate*] relate in full.

154 *by parcels*] in parts, partially.

155 *intently*] with full attention, intently. Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads less satisfactorily *instinctively* and the later Folios *distinctively*.

She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :  
She swore, in faith, 't was strange, 't was passing strange ;  
'T was pitiful, 't was wondrous pitiful : 161  
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd  
That heaven had made her such a man : she thank'd me,  
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake :  
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
And I loved her that she did pity them.  
This only is the witchcraft I have used.  
Here comes the lady ; let her witness it. 170

*Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants*

DUKE. I think this tale would win my daughter too.  
Good Brabantio,  
Take up this mangled matter at the best :  
Men do their broken weapons rather use  
Than their bare hands.

BRA. I pray you, hear her speak :  
If she confess that she was half the wooer,  
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame  
Light on the man ! Come hither, gentle mistress :  
Do you perceive in all this noble company  
Where most you owe obedience ?

DES. My noble father, 180  
I do perceive here a divided duty :  
To you I am bound for life and education ;

159 *sighs*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read unsatisfactorily *kisses*.

173 *Take up . . . at the best*] Make the best of this ugly tortured business.

My life and education both do learn me  
 How to respect you; you are the lord of duty.  
 I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,  
 And so much duty as my mother show'd  
 To you, preferring you before her father,  
 So much I challenge that I may profess  
 Due to the Moor my lord.

BRA.                                God be with you! I have done.  
 Please it your grace, on to the state-affairs:                                190  
 I had rather to adopt a child than get it.  
 Come hither, Moor:

I here do give thee that with all my heart,  
 Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart  
 I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,  
 I am glad at soul I have no other child;  
 For thy escape would teach me tyranny,  
 To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord.

DUKE. Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence  
 Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers                                200  
 Into your favour.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended  
 By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.

183 *learn*] teach.

191 *get*] beget.

197 *escape*] escapade.

199 *Let me speak like yourself*] Let me speak as it would become you to speak (of *un fait accompli*).

200 *grise*] step; from the old French *greis*, plural of *gré*, a step.

202 *When remedies . . . ended*] Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 28: "past cure is still past care." See also *Wint. Tale*, III, ii, 219-220, and *Macb.*, III, ii, 11-12.

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone  
 Is the next way to draw new mischief on.  
 What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,  
 Patience her injury a mockery makes.  
 The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;  
 He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

BRA. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile; 210  
 We lose it not so long as we can smile.  
 He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears  
 But the free comfort which from thence he hears;  
 But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,  
 That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.  
 These sentences, to sugar or to gall,  
 Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:  
 But words are words; I never yet did hear  
 That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.  
 I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state. 220

DUKE. The Turk with a most mighty preparation  
 makes for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place  
 is best known to you; and though we have there a sub-

207 *Patience her injury a mockery makes*] Patience ridicules the loss.

213 *the free comfort . . . hears*] The moral precepts of consolation which  
 are liberally bestowed when sentences are pronounced in a court of  
 law. In line 216, *infra*, "sentences" is used in the different sense of  
 "maxims" or "proverbs."

215 *to pay grief*] to satisfy the call of grief.

216-217 *These sentences . . . equivocal*] These maxims have equivocal  
 force, have ambiguous significance, and equally well tend to sweetness  
 or bitterness, tend to console or exasperate.

219 *pierced*] penetrated, reached, touched. Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 740:  
 "Honest plain words best *pierce the ear* of grief."

221 *preparation*] force ready for action. Cf. line 14, *supra*.

stitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

OTH. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,  
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war 230  
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnize  
A natural and prompt alacrity  
I find in hardness; and do undertake  
These present wars against the Ottomites.  
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,  
I crave fit disposition for my wife,  
Due reference of place and exhibition,  
With such accommodation and besort  
As levels with her breeding.

DUKE. If you please,  
Be 't at her father's.

BRA. I'll not have it so. 240

OTH. Nor I.

DES. Nor I, I would not there reside,

224-225 *opinion . . . effects*] public opinion, which exerts effective sovereignty.

226 *slubber the gloss*] sully or blur the brightness.

231 *thrice-driven bed of down*] bed of softest and lightest feathers. A driving fan was applied to feathers in order to separate the light from the heavy.

*agnize*] confess, acknowledge.

235 *bending to your state*] making obeisance to your throne.

237 *Due reference . . . exhibition*] Due allotment of residence and maintenance or allowance.

238 *besort*] companionship, retinue; not found elsewhere as a substantive.

To put my father in impatient thoughts  
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,  
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear,  
And let me find a charter in your voice  
To assist my simpleness.

DUKE. What would you, Desdemona?

DES. That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued 250  
Even to the very quality of my lord;  
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,  
And to his honours and his valiant parts  
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.  
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,  
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,  
The rites for which I love him are bereft me,  
And I a heavy interim shall support  
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

OTH. Let her have your voices. 260

244 *your prosperous ear*] your propitious, favourable ear. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read more simply *a gracious ear*.

245 *charter*] legal protection.

249 *My downright violence and storm of fortunes*] My unbridled impetuosity and tempestuous challenge of the common course of fortune. Thus the Folios. The First Quarto reads *scorne of Fortunes for storm of fortunes*.

251 *the very quality*] the whole nature, character, and virtue; "quality" has a wider significance here than its common sense of "profession." Thus the Folios. The First Quarto reads *the utmost pleasure*.

252 *I saw . . . mind*] I found Othello's true character, not in his black complexion, but in his mental endowments.

256 *A moth*] An idle parasite.

Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not,  
 To please the palate of my appetite;  
 Nor to comply with heat — the young affects  
 In me defunct — and proper satisfaction;  
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind:  
 And heaven defer'd your good souls, that you think  
 I will your serious and great business scant  
 For she is with me. No, when light-wing'd toys  
 Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dulness  
 My speculative and officed instruments, 270  
 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,  
 Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,  
 And all indign and base adversities  
 Make head against my estimation!

263 *the young affects*] the affections or passions of youth.

264 *In me defunct*] Capell's correction of the original unintelligible reading *In my defunct*. The punctuation of this and the former line is also due to Capell. For the general sense cf. Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn*, Act I, Sc. i: "our cold fathers In whom long since *their youthful heats were dead*." Othello (III, iii, 269–270, *infra*) thinks to explain Desdemona's alleged infidelity: "for I am declined Into the vale of years, — yet that's not much."  
*proper*] personal, selfish, self-indulgent.

266 *defend . . . that you think*] forbid you from thinking.

269 *seel*] close or sew up the eyes. A method employed in taming hawks.  
 Cf. III, iii, 214, *infra*.

270 *My speculative and officed instruments*] My faculties of thought or vision and of activity in the discharge of duty.

271 *my disports*] my indulgences in pleasure.

272 *skillet*] kettle or saucepan.

273 *indign and base adversities*] unworthy and disgraceful accusations of enmity.

274 *estimation*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *reputation*.



# OTHELLO

ACT I

DUKE. Be it as you shall privately determine,  
Either for her stay or going: the affair cries haste,  
And speed must answer 't; you must hence to-night.

DES. To-night, my lord?

DUKE. This night.

OTH. With all my heart.

DUKE. At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.  
Othello, leave some officer behind, 280  
And he shall our commission bring to you;  
With such things else of quality and respect  
As doth import you.

OTH. So please your grace, my ancient;  
A man he is of honesty and trust:  
To his conveyance I assign my wife,  
With what else needful your good grace shall think  
To be sent after me.

DUKE. Let it be so.  
Good night to every one. [*To Brab.*] And, noble signior,  
If virtue no delighted beauty lack, 290  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

FIRST SEN. Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.

BRA. Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:  
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.*]

283 *import*] concern.

289 *If virtue no delighted beauty lack*] If virtue consist in attractions  
capable of giving delight. "Delighted" here means "delightful,"  
capable of causing delight. Cf. *Cymb.*, V, iv, 101, 102: "my gift  
The more delay'd *delighted*."

293 *She has deceived . . . and may thee*] An ironical anticipation of the  
fate attending the union of Desdemona and Othello.

OTH. My life upon her faith! Honest Iago,  
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:  
I prithee, let thy wife attend on her;  
And bring them after in the best advantage.  
Come, Desdemona; I have but an hour  
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,  
To spend with thee: we must obey the time. 300

[*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.*]

ROD. Iago!

IAGO. What say'st thou, noble heart?

ROD. What will I do thinkest thou?

IAGO. Why, go to bed and sleep.

ROD. I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO. If thou dost, I shall never love thee after.  
Why, thou silly gentleman!

ROD. It is silliness to live when to live is torment;  
and then have we a prescription to die when death is  
our physician. 310

IAGO. O villanous! I have looked upon the world for  
four times seven years; and since I could distinguish  
betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that  
knew how to love himself. Ere I would say I would  
drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would  
change my humanity with a baboon.

ROD. What should I do? I confess it is my shame  
to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

297 *in the best advantage*] at the first or most favourable opportunity.

305 *incontinently*] straightway, immediately.

312 *four times seven years*] Iago here claimed to be no more than twenty-eight years old.

315 *guinea-hen*] a word occasionally used as a slang term for "courtesan."

IAGO. Virtue! a fig! 't is in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love, to be a sect or scion.

ROD. It cannot be.

332

IAGO. It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: drown thyself! drown cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness: I could never better stead thee

---

320 *gardens*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read less satisfactorily *our Gardens*.

323 *gender*] species.

324 *manured*] cultivated, or tilled. Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, XI, 28: "his own hand *manuring*."

325 *corrigible*] corrective, or correcting.

326 *balance*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read, quite unintelligibly, *the brain*.

331 *a sect or scion*] a cutting or graft.

336 *thy deserving*] thy merits, deserts.

337 *better stead*] better serve.

than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor — put money in thy purse — nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration; put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills: — fill thy purse with money. The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must: therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst: if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her. 358

339 *defeat thy favour*] disfigure or disguise thy countenance.

343 *an answerable sequestration*] a corresponding separation, breach, or parting.

346 *locusts*] According to Gerard's *Herbal*, the fruit or bean of the carob (*Silqua dulcis*) tree, found both in South Italy and Palestine, was of a juicy sweetness, and was "of some called St. John's bread, and thought to be that which is translated 'locusts' whereon St. John did feed when he was in the wilderness."

347 *coloquintida*] more familiarly known as "colocynth," made from "bitter" apples, a familiar ingredient in pills.

353 *erring*] vagabond.

ROD. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue? 360

IAGO. Thou art sure of me: go, make money: I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse; go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

ROD. Where shall we meet i' the morning? 370

IAGO. At my lodging.

ROD. I'll be with thee betimes.

IAGO. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

ROD. What say you?

IAGO. No more of drowning, do you hear?

ROD. I am changed: I'll go sell all my land. [*Exit.*]

IAGO. Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;  
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,  
If I would time expend with such a snipe  
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
He has done my office: I know not if 't be true;  
But I for mere suspicion in that kind

380

363 *hearted*] fixed in my heart.

367 *Traverse*] March; a military word of command.

379 *snipe*] "Woodcock" is also frequent in the sense of simpleton.

381-382 *And it is thought . . . my office*] See note on I, i, 21, *supra*, and II, i, 289-293, and IV, ii, 148, *infra*.

Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;  
The better shall my purpose work on him.  
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now;  
To get his place, and to plume up my will  
In double knavery — How, how? — Let's see: —  
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear  
That he is too familiar with his wife.  
He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
To be suspected; named to make women false.  
The Moor is of a free and open nature,  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;  
And will as tenderly be led by the nose  
As asses are.

390

I have't It is engender'd. Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.  
[Exit.

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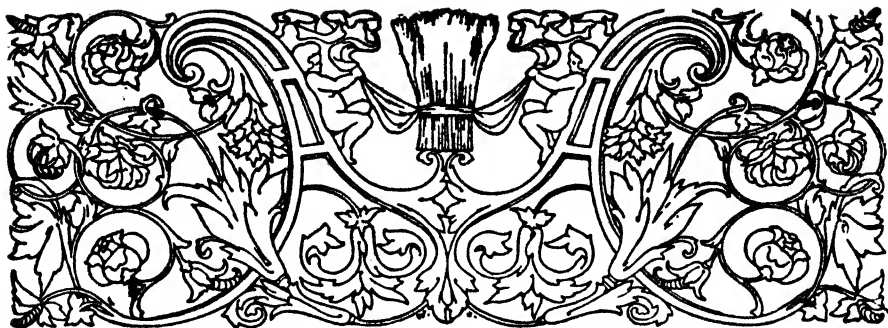
384 *Will . . . surety*] Will act as if I were certain of it.

*He holds me well*] He thinks well of me.

386 *a proper man*] a handsome fellow.

387 *plume up my will*] exalt, glorify my ambition.

391 *a smooth dispose*] a smooth or gentle disposition or manner.



ACT SECOND — SCENE I — A SEA-PORT  
IN CYPRUS

AN OPEN PLACE NEAR THE QUAY

*Enter MONTANO and two Gentlemen*

MONTANO



HAT FROM THE CAPE  
can you discern at sea?

FIRST GENT. Nothing at all:  
it is a high-wrought flood;  
I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and  
the main,  
Descry a sail.

MON. Methinks the wind hath  
spoke aloud at land;  
A fuller blast ne'er shook our  
battlements:  
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the  
sea,

What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,  
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

7 *ruffian'd*] blustered.

9 *hold the mortise*] keep the dovetailed beams in place.

SEC. GENT. A segregation of the Turkish fleet: 10  
 For do but stand upon the foaming shore,  
 The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds;  
 The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,  
 Seems to cast water on the burning bear,  
 And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:  
 I never did like molestation view  
 On the enchained flood.

MON. If that the Turkish fleet  
 Be not ershelte'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;  
 It is impossible to bear it out.

*Enter a third Gentleman*

THIRD GENT. News, lads! our wars are done. 20  
 The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,  
 That their designment halts: a noble ship of Venice  
 Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance  
 On most part of their fleet.

MON. How! is this true?

---

13 *The wind-shaked surge . . . mane*] The foaming white tops of the breakers are likened to the "manes" of horses, the breakers being known in popular parlance as "sea-horses."

14 *the burning bear*] the shining constellation of the Great Bear, the "ursa major" in the northern sky.

15 *the guards of the ever-fixed pole*] the stars near the pole star. In contemporary treatises of navigation "the guards" is a term specifically bestowed on the two stars " $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  ursae minoris," which are usually depicted on the shoulder and foreleg of the Little Bear.

23 *wreck*] The old reading *wrack*, i. e., ruin, would be better retained here.



THIRD GENT. The ship is here put in,  
A Veronesa; Michael Cassio,  
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,  
Is come on shore: the Moor himself at sea,  
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

MON. I am glad on't; 't is a worthy governor. 30

THIRD GENT. But this same Cassio, though he speak  
of comfort  
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly  
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted  
With foul and violent tempest.

MON. Pray heavens he be;  
For I have served him, and the man commands  
Like a full soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho!  
As well to see the vessel that's come in  
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,  
Even till we make the main and the aerial blue  
An indistinct regard.

THIRD GENT. Come, let's do so; 40  
For every minute is expectancy  
Of more arrivance.

*Enter CASSIO*

CAS. Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle,  
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens

---

26 *A Veronesa*] Doubtless a ship equipped at the expense of the Veronese for the Venetian service. Verona was a dependency of Venice.

36 *full*] finished, perfect.

39-40 *Even till . . . regard*] As far as the distant horizon, where the blue of the sea and the blue of the sky merge into one indivisible line of vision.

Give him defence against the elements,  
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

MON. Is he well shipp'd?

CAS. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot  
Of very expert and approved allowance;  
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death, 50  
Stand in bold cure. [A cry within: "A sail, a sail, a sail!"

*Enter a fourth Gentleman*

CAS. What noise?

FOURTH GENT. The town is empty; on the brow o'  
the sea

Stand ranks of people, and they cry "A sail!"

CAS. My hopes do shape him for the governor.

[Guns heard.]

SEC. GENT. They do discharge their shot of courtesy:  
Our friends at least.

CAS. I pray you, sir, go forth,  
And give us truth who 't is that is arrived.

SEC. GENT. I shall.

[Exit.]

MON. But, good lieutenant, is your general wived? 60

CAS. Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid  
That paragon's description and wild fame;  
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,

---

49 *Of very expert and approved allowance*] With a reputation for great skill and experience.

50 *not surfeited to death*] not quite sick unto death.

51 *Stand in bold cure*] Are confident of remedy, are assured that all may yet be well.

53 *brow o' the sea*] edge, margin of the shore.

63 *excels . . . pens*] outmatches all the happy turns of pens devoted to panegyric.

And in the essential vesture of creation  
Does tire the ingener.

*Re-enter second Gentleman*

How now! who has put in?

SEC. GENT. 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

CAS. He has had most favourable and happy speed:  
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,  
The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,  
Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel,  
As having sense of beauty, do omit  
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by  
The divine Desdemona.

70

MON. What is she?

CAS. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,  
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;  
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts  
A se'nnight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,

64-65 *And in the essential . . . ingener*] And in those essential or supreme qualities of beauty, which are possible in created beings [she] wearies out or defeats the powers of the pictorial artist. "Ingener" is used in the sense of "designer" or "author." Cf. Gabriel Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation* (1592), p. 8: "*ingener* of phrases."

65 *tire the ingener*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *tamely bear an excellency*.

*put in*] *sc.* to port.

69 *gutter'd rocks*] rocks with channels or gutters cut about them by the sea's action.

70 *ensteep'd*] steeped in water, submerged. Thus the Folios. The First Quarto reads *enscaped*, i. e., *enscaped*.

71-72 *omit . . . natures*] forgo their deadly characteristics. "Mortal" means destructive, death dealing.

77 *a se'nnight's speed*] a week's space.

And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,  
 That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,  
 Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms, 80  
 Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,  
 And bring all Cyprus comfort.

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Attendants*

O, behold,  
 The riches of the ship is come on shore!  
 Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.  
 Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,  
 Before, behind thee, and on every hand,  
 Enwheel thee round!

DES. I thank you, valiant Cassio.  
 What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

CAS. He is not yet arrived: nor know I aught  
 But that he's well and will be shortly here. 90

DES. O, but I fear — How lost you company?

CAS. The great contention of the sea and skies  
 Parted our fellowship — But, hark! a sail.

*[A cry within: "A sail, a sail!" Guns heard.]*

SEC. GENT. They give their greeting to the citadel:  
 This likewise is a friend.

CAS. See for the news. *[Exit Gentleman.]*  
 Good ancient, you are welcome. *[To Emilia]* Welcome,  
 mistress:

81 *extincted*] extinguished, quenched.

82 *And bring . . . comfort*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios omit the line.

83 *riches*] used in the singular like the French *richesse*, i. e., wealth. Cf.

III, iii, 177, *infra*.

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,  
That I extend my manners; 't is my breeding  
That gives me this bold show of courtesy. [*Kissing her.*]

IAGO. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips 100  
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,  
You'd have enough.

DES. Alas, she has no speech.

IAGO. In faith, too much;  
I find it still when I have list to sleep:  
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,  
She puts her tongue a little in her heart  
And chides with thinking.

EMIL. You have little cause to say so.

IAGO. Come on, come on; you are pictures out of  
doors, 110  
Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,  
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,  
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your  
beds.

DES. O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

IAGO. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk:  
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

EMIL. You shall not write my praise.

IAGO. No, let me not.

104 *have list*] have inclination.

109 *pictures*] beautiful painted objects.

110 *Bells*] Sounding cymbals.

111 *Saints in your injuries*] Assume the meek air of saints when you are bent on injuring others.

112 *housewives*] hussies, ~~with~~ an implication of wantonness.

DES. What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst  
praise me?

IAGO. O gentle 'ady, do not put me to't;  
For I am nothing if not critical.

DES. Come on, assay — There's one gone to the  
harbour? 120

IAGO. Ay, madam.

DES. I am not merry; but I do beguile  
The thing I am by seeming otherwise.  
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

IAGO. I am about it; but indeed my invention  
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frize;  
It plucks out brains and all: but my Muse labours,  
And thus she is deliver'd.

If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,  
The one's for use, the other useth it. 130

DES. Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

IAGO. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,  
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

DES. Worse and worse.

EMIL. How if fair and foolish?

IAGO. She never yet was foolish that was fair;  
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

DES. These are old fond paradoxes to make fools

---

119 *critical*] censorious. Similarly "critic" commonly means "censor."

126 *frize*] rough woollen cloth to which birdlime naturally sticks fast.

130 *the other useth it*] her wit enables her to employ her beauty to the best advantage.

133 *white*] a quibble on "white" and "wight," a fellow. Cf. line 157, *infra*.

138 *fond*] silly.

laugh i' the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou  
for her that's foul and foolish? 140

IAGO. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto,  
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

DES. O heavy ignorance! thou praisest the worst  
best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a de-  
serving woman indeed, one that in the authority of her  
merit did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

IAGO. She that was ever fair and never proud,  
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,  
Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,  
Fled from her wish and yet said "Now I may;" 150  
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,  
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly;  
She that in wisdom never was so frail  
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;  
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,  
See suitors following and not look behind;  
She was a wight, if ever such wight were, —

141 *foul*] ugly.

145-146 *one that . . . malice itself*] one that was so conscious of her own  
merit and of the authority it gave her that she could justly call on  
malice itself to vouch for her virtuous character.

148 *Had tongue at will*] Had free command of speech.

154 *change . . . tail*] give up delicate fare in exchange for coarse fare.  
The cod's head was held to be delicate eating, while the salmon's tail  
was thought not to be worth serving up at table. An ambiguous  
reference has been suggested here to Desdemona's preference for a  
coarse suitor like Othello to one of greater refinement, such as Rod-  
erigo. In that case Iago doubtless had in mind that a cod's head  
meant a fool as well as an edible delicacy.

156 *See . . . behind*] This line is omitted from the First Quarto.

DES. To do what?

IAGO. To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

DES. O most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor?

163

CAS. He speaks home, madam: you may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

IAGO. [*Aside*] He takes her by the palm: ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true; 't is so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in. Very good; well kissed! an excellent courtesy! 't is so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? would they were clyster-pipes for your sake! — [*Trumpet within.*] The Moor! I know his trumpet.

176

CAS. 'T is truly so.

DES. Let's meet him and receive him.

CAS. Lo, where he comes!

159 *chronicle small beer*] keep account of small household expenses.

162 *profane and liberal*] blasphemous and licentious.

169 *gyve . . . courtship*] fetter, entrap thee in thine own acts of courtesy.

Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *catch you in your own courtesies*.

171–172 *kissed your three fingers*] made the gesture of politeness, which was in vogue in high society.

173 *play the sir*] show your good breeding and gallantry.

173–174 *well kissed! . . . courtesy*] Probably Cassio has just saluted Desdemona by kissing his hand.



*Enter OTHELLO and Attendants*

OTH. O my fair warrior!

DES. 180  
My dear Othello!

OTH. It gives me wonder great as my content  
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!  
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas  
Olympus-high, and duck again as low  
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,  
'T were now to be most happy; for I fear,  
My soul hath her content so absolute  
That not another comfort like to this 190  
Succeeds in unknown fate.

DES. The heavens forbid  
But that our loves and comforts should increase,  
Even as our days do grow!

OTH. Amen to that, sweet powers!  
I cannot speak enough of this content;  
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:  
And this, and this, the greatest discords be [*Kissing her.*]  
That e'er our hearts shall make!

IAGO. [*Aside*] O, you are well tuned now!

180 *my fair warrior*] a conventional apostrophe of amorous sonneteers of the day. Cf. Spenser's *Amoretti*, lvii, 1: "*Sweet warrior.*" It is derived from Petrarch's "*dolce guerrera,*" which is constantly imitated by the French poets. Cf. De Baif's "*belle ennemi*" and Desportes' "*douce adversaire.*" The phrase is also found in *Pandora* (London, 1584), an adaptation of Ronsard's verse by John Southern or Soothern.

But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,  
As honest as I am.

OTH. Come, let us to the castle.  
News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks are  
drown'd. 200

How does my old acquaintance of this isle?  
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus;  
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,  
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote  
In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago,  
Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers:  
Bring thou the master to the citadel;  
He is a good one, and his worthiness  
Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona,  
Once more well met at Cyprus. 210

[*Exeunt all but Iago and Roderigo.*]

IAGO. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour.  
Come hither. If thou be'st valiant — as, they say, base  
men being in love have then a nobility in their natures  
more than is native to them — list me. The lieutenant  
to-night watches on the court of guard. First, I must

198 *set down the pegs*] lower the pegs or pins (on which the wires were  
tightly stretched on well-tuned musical instruments). Iago means  
that he will turn this harmony to discord.

202 *well desired*] much solicited by hospitable invitations.

204 *out of fashion*] without method, aimlessly.

*dote*] talk stupidly.

207 *the master*] the sailing master of the ship, who held first place under  
the captain in large vessels.

212-214 *base men . . . native to them*] Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, v, 158: "*Nature  
is fine in love.*"

215 *on the court of guard*] on guard, on sentinel duty. The phrase "court

tell thee this: Desdemona is directly in love with him.

ROD. With him! why, 't is not possible.

217

IAGO. Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies: and will she love him still for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be, again to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in: now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct her in it and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted — as it is a most pregnant and unforced position — who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing

of guard" is common. "Court" is commonly assumed to be a corruption of the French "corps."

218 *Lay thy finger thus*] Iago puts his finger to his lips, enjoining silence on Roderigo.

221 *and will she love him*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios have merely *To love him*.

232 *pregnant and unforced*] most obvious and natural.

236 *civil and humane seeming*] courteous and polite demeanour.

236-237 *the better compassing . . . affection*] the better indulgence of his licentious and most secret wanton disposition.

of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: a slipper and subtle knave; a finder out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself: a devilish knave! Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after. a pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already. 244

ROD. I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blest condition.

IAGO. Blest fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blest, she would never have loved the Moor: blest pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

ROD. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy. 251

IAGO. Lechery, by this hand; an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together. Villanous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion: pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought

238 *slipper*] an old form of "slippery."

239 *stamp and counterfeit advantages*] coin and forge opportunities.

242 *green*] young, unripe.

244 *found him*] acknowledged his fascination.

246 *blest condition*] pious temperament.

252 *index*] The "index" was usually prefixed to books of the day and was applied generally to the prefatory matter.

256 *mutualities*] interchanges of familiarity.

257 *the incorporate conclusion*] cohabitation.

you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay 't upon you: Cassio knows you not: I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline, or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister. 264

ROD. Well.

IAGO. Sir, he is rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by the means I shall then have to prefer them, and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity. 274

ROD. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

IAGO. I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

ROD. Adieu.

[*Exit.*]

IAGO. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it; 280

262 *tainting*] casting a slur on, discrediting.

266 *sudden in choler*] hasty in anger.

269-270 *whose qualification . . . again*] whose assuagement of anger, whose pacification shall never be without some unpleasant taste of bitterness. "Qualification" is a rare derivative from "qualify," which ordinarily meant "appease, assuage, allay." Cassio talks (II, iii, 36, *infra*) of a cup of wine being "qualified" (*i. e.*, allayed, diluted with water).

272 *prefer*] advance.

That she loves him, 't is apt and of great credit:  
 The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,  
 Is of a constant, loving, noble nature;  
 And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona  
 A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,  
 Not out of absolute iust, though peradventure  
 I stand accountant for as great a sin,  
 But partly led to diet my revenge,  
 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor  
 Hath leap'd into my seat: the thought whereof  
 Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards;  
 And nothing can or shall content my soul  
 Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife;  
 Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor  
 At least into a jealousy so strong  
 That judgement cannot cure. Which thing to do,  
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash

290

281 *apt . . . credit*] natural and most credible.

289-290 *I do suspect . . . seat*] See note on I, i, 21, and I, iii, 381-382, *supra*, and IV, ii, 148, *infra*.

291 *like a poisonous mineral gnaw*] like a poisonous mineral (which kills by corrosion).

297-298 *If this poor . . . putting on*] Thus Steevens, who substituted for *I crush* of the First Quarto, and *I trace* of the other early editions, the words *I trash*. The verb "trash" was a technical term of the kennel, and meant "to restrain by fastening a weight to the neck of an over-eager hound." Iago means that he will succeed if Roderigo, this poor insignificant Venetian ("trash of Venice"), whom he is checking because of his impetuosity in pursuit of his lady love, prove equal to the task of provoking the quarrel with Cassio. If the Folio *I trace* be retained, Iago may mean that he is dogging the steps of Roderigo in order to quicken his pace (in the pursuit of Desdemona), but there seem difficulties in this interpretation of "for his quick hunting."

For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,  
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,  
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb; 300  
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too;  
 Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me,  
 For making him egregiously an ass  
 And practising upon his peace and quiet  
 Even to madness. 'T is here, but yet confused:  
 Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. [Exit.

SCENE II — A STREET

*Enter a Herald with a proclamation; People following*

HER. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there

300 *in the rank garb*] in his gross character, as warrants his coarseness.

Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *in the right garb*. "Rank" is frequently found in the sense of "lascivious," "wanton."

305 *'T is here*] Iago raises his hand to his head.

306 *Knavery's . . . used*] A knave can never clearly forecast his plans till the time for action arrives.

3 *mere perdition*] entire destruction.

5 *addiction*] inclination. Thus the Second Quarto, which the Folios misprint *addition*. The First Quarto reads *minde*.

8 *offices*] rooms in the castle where stores of food and drink were kept.

is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of 10 Cyprus and our noble general Othello! [Exeunt.]

## SCENE III—A HALL IN THE CASTLE

*Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants*

OTH. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night: Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop, Not to outsport discretion.

CAS. Iago hath direction what to do; But notwithstanding with my personal eye Will I look to 't.

OTH. Iago is most honest. Michael, good night: to-morrow with your earliest Let me have speech with you. Come, my dear love, The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue; That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you. 10 Good night. [Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, and Attendants.]

*Enter IAGO*

CAS. Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

IAGO. Not this hour, lieutenant; 't is not yet ten o' the clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who let us not therefore blame: he hath not yet made wanton the night with her, and she is sport for Jove.

3 *to outsport discretion*] to neglect precautions by excessive indulgence in sport and revelry.

14 *cast us*] dismissed us.



CAS. She's a most exquisite lady.

IAGO. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

CAS. Indeed she's a most fresh and delicate creature. 20

IAGO. What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.

CAS. An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

IAGO. And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

CAS. She is indeed perfection.

IAGO. Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

CAS. Not to-night, good Iago: I have very poor and 30 unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

IAGO. O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

CAS. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

IAGO. What, man! 't is a night of revels: the gallants desire it. 40

CAS. Where are they?

IAGO. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

CAS. I'll do 't; but it dislikes me. [Exit.

---

27 a stoup] a large tankard.

36 craftily qualified] slyly allayed, diluted with water. See note on II, i, 269-270, *supra*.

IAGO. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,  
 With that which he hath drunk to-night already,  
 He'll be as full of quarrel and offence  
 As my young mistress' dog. Now my sick fool Roderigo,  
 Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,  
 To Desdemona hath to-night caroused  
 Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch: 50  
 Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits,  
 That hold their honours in a wary distance,  
 The very elements of this warlike isle,  
 Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,  
 And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunk-  
 ards,

Am I to put our Cassio in some action  
 That may offend the isle. But here they come:  
 If consequence do but approve my dream,  
 My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

*Re-enter CASSIO; with him MONTANO and Gentlemen; Servants  
 following with wine*

CAS. 'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already. 60

MON. Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I  
 am a soldier.

IAGO. Some wine, ho!

50 *pottle-deep*] a "pottle" was a measure of two quarts.

52 *That hold their honours . . . distance*] That treat their honour with  
 the highest respect, are most sensitive on points of honour.

53 *The very elements . . . isle*] The very quintessence of the warlike  
 people here.

58 *If consequence . . . approve*] If the result attest, prove true.

60 *a rouse*] a deep draught.

[Sings]      And let me the canakin clink, clink;  
                  And let me the canakin clink:  
                  A soldier's a man;  
                  A life's but a span;  
                  Why then let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys!

CAS. 'Fore God, an excellent song.

70

IAGO. I learned it in England, where indeed they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander, — Drink, ho! — are nothing to your English.

CAS. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

IAGO. Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit ere the next pottle can be filled.

CAS. To the health of our general!

MON. I am for it, lieutenant, and I'll do you justice.

80

IAGO. O sweet England!

64-68 *And let me . . . a soldier drink*] A verse out of a popular drinking song of the day, although it has not been met with elsewhere in this precise form. Cf. Ravenscroft's *Pammelia* (1609), where a drinking song has the refrain: "Tap the cannikin, troll the cannikin, Toss the cannikin, turn the cannikin." "Canakin" or "cannikin" is, of course, a diminutive of "can."

72-74 *your Dane . . . your English*] For other references by Shakespeare to the drinking habits of these peoples, cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, ii, 76, *seq.* and *Hamlet*, I, iv, 17, *seq.*

75 *expert*] Thus the First Quarto. The other early editions read *exquisite*.

77 *Almain*] a common term for a German.

80 *I'll do you justice*] I'll drink as much as you. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, V, iii, 71: "you have done me right."

[Sings] King Stephen was a worthy peer,  
 His breeches cost him but a crown;  
 He held them sixpence all too dear,  
 With that he call'd the tailor lown.

He was a wight of high renown,  
 And thou art but of low degree;  
 'Tis pride that pulls the country down;  
 Then take thou auld cloak about thee.

Some wine, ho!

90

CAS. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

IAGO. Will you hear 't again?

CAS. No, for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well: God's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

IAGO. It's true, good lieutenant.

CAS. For mine own part — no offence to the general, nor any man of quality — I hope to be saved.

IAGO. And so do I too, lieutenant.

100

CAS. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs. God forgive us our

---

82-89 *King Stephen . . . cloak about thee*] A quotation from an old ballad called *Take thy old cloak about thee* which is given in full in Percy's *Reliques* (ed. 1876, Vol. I, pp. 195-198). Allusion is made to the lines concerning King Stephen in *The Tempest*, IV, i, 221-222.

95-96 *and there be souls must not be saved*] The Quartos omit this sentence.

# OTHELLO

## ACT II

sins! Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my ancient: this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

ALL. Excellent well.

CAS. Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk. [Exit. 110]

MON. To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

IAGO. You see this fellow that is gone before;  
He is a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar  
And give direction: and do but see his vice;  
'T is to his virtue a just equinox,  
The one as long as the other: 't is pity of him.  
I fear the trust Othello puts him in  
On some odd time of his infirmity  
Will shake this island.

MON. 120 But is he often thus?

IAGO. 'T is evermore the prologue to his sleep:  
He'll watch the horologe a double set,  
If drink rock not his cradle.

MON. It were well  
The general were put in mind of it.  
Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature  
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio  
And looks not on his evils: is not this true?

---

111-112 *set the watch*] mount guard.

122 *He'll watch . . . a double set*] He'll keep awake while the clock goes round twice, through the whole twenty-four hours.

---

*Enter* RODERIGO

IAGO. [*Aside to him*] How now, Roderigo!  
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go. [*Exit Roderigo.*

MON. And 't is great pity that the noble Moor 130  
Should hazard such a place as his own second  
With one of an ingraft infirmity:  
It were an honest action to say  
So to the Moor

IAGO. Not I, for this fair island:  
I do love Cassio well, and would do much  
To cure him of this evil: — But, hark! what noise?  
*A cry within: "Help! help!"*

*Re-enter* CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO

CAS. 'Zounds! you rogue! you rascal!

MON. What's the matter, lieutenant?

CAS. A knave teach me my duty! But I'll beat the  
knave into a wicker bottle. 140

ROD. Beat me!

CAS. Dost thou prate, rogue? [*Striking Roderigo.*

MON. Nay, good lieutenant; I pray you, sir, hold  
your hand.

CAS. Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the  
mazzard.

MON. Come, come, you're drunk.

CAS. Drunk! [*They fight.*

---

132 *ingraft*] inveterate, rooted.

140 *wicker bottle*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *Twiggen Bottle*.

A flask covered with straw network is intended by either word.

# OTHELLO

## ACT II

IAGO. [*Aside to Roderigo*] Away, I say; go out, and  
cry a mutiny. [*Exit Roderigo.*]

Nay, good lieutenant! God's will, gentlemen! 150  
Help, ho! — Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — sir; —  
Help, masters! — Here's a goodly watch indeed!

[*A bell rings.*]

Who's that that rings the bell? — Diablo, ho!  
The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant, hold;  
You will be shamed for ever.

*Re-enter OTHELLO and Attendants*

OTH. What is the matter here?

MON. 'Zounds, I bleed still; I am hurt to the death.  
[*Faints.*]

OTH. Hold, for your lives!

IAGO. Hold, ho! Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, —  
gentlemen, —  
Have you forgot all sense of place and duty? 159  
Hold! the general speaks to you; hold, hold, for  
shame!

OTH. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?  
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that  
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

153 *Diablo*] A contraction of the Italian "Diabolo," i. e., the devil.

156 *I am hurt to the death* [*Faints*] Thus the Second and Third Quartos.  
The First Quarto omits the stage direction. The First Folio adds  
*He dies* to the text of the line. Such words could not be a stage  
direction; for Montano does not die. If *He dies* be retained, it  
must be as a threat on Montano's part to pursue the fight till  
Cassio die. But it is simpler to omit the words.

163 *Ottomites*] The Turks had been drowned and thereby prevented  
from fighting on land.

For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:  
 He that stirs next to carve for his own rage  
 Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.  
 Silence that dreadful bell. it frights the isle  
 From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?  
 Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,  
 Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee. 170

IAGO. I do not know: friends all but now, even  
 now,  
 In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom  
 Devesting them for bed; and then, but now,  
 As if some planet had unwitted men,  
 Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,  
 In opposition bloody. I cannot speak  
 Any beginning to this peevish odds;  
 And would in action glorious I had lost  
 Those legs that brought me to a part of it!

OTH. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot? 180

CAS. I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak.

OTH. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;  
 The gravity and stillness of your youth  
 The world hath noted, and your name is great

164 *put by*] abate, end.

165 *carve for*] gratify, from the notion of causing pleasure by serving food. Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto, which feebly substitutes *carve forth*.

166 *upon his motion*] on his stirring, if he move.

168 *her propriety*] her natural quiet.

172 *In quarter*] In their quarters in the guard room.

177 *peevish odds*] foolish quarrel.

183 *stillness*] placidity.



In mouths of wisest censure: what's the matter,  
That you unlace your reputation thus,  
And spend your rich opinion for the name  
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

MON. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger:  
Your officer, Iago, can inform you — 190  
While I spare speech, which something now offends  
me —

Of all that I do know: nor know I aught  
By me that's said or done amiss this night;  
Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,  
And to defend ourselves it be a sin  
When violence assails us.

OTH. Now, by heaven,  
My blood begins my safer guides to rule,  
And passion, having my best judgement collied,  
Assays to lead the way: if I once stir,  
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you 200  
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know  
How this foul rout began, who set it on,  
And he that is approved in this offence,  
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,

---

185 *censure*] judgment.

186 *unlace*] undo, remove by unlacing, as of a garment.

187 *spend . . . opinion*] squander your good repute.

191 *something now offends me*] somewhat hurts me now.

194 *self-charity*] care of one's self.

197 *My blood*] My passionate feeling.

198 *collied*] blackened, darkened. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 145: "the  
*collied* night."

203 *approved in*] proved guilty of.

Shall lose me. What! in a town of war,  
 Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,  
 To manage private and domestic quarrel,  
 In right, and on the court and guard of safety!  
 'T is monstrous. Iago, who began't?

MON. If partially affined, or leagued in office, 210  
 Thou dost deliver : ore or less than truth,  
 Thou art no soldier.

IAGO. 'Touch me not so near:  
 I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth  
 Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;  
 Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth  
 Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general.  
 Montano and myself being in speech,  
 There comes a fellow crying out for help,  
 And Cassio following him with determined sword,  
 To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman 220  
 Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause:  
 Myself the crying fellow did pursue,  
 Lest by his clamour — as it so fell out —

205 *lose me*] forfeit my favour.

207 *manage*] handle, deal with.

208 *court and guard of safety*] a somewhat awkward variation of the common phrase "court of guard," which seems a corruption of "corps de garde." See note on II, i, 215, *supra*. "Of safety" has the force of an epithet implying that the guard exists in the interest of safety.

210-211 *If partially . . . truth*] If being connected by close ties or official relations, which make for partiality, thou art thereby led to give a partial account.

219 *with determined sword*] with drawn sword with which he was resolved to strike him.

The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,  
 Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather  
 For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,  
 And Cassio high in oath; which till to-night  
 I ne'er might say before. When I came back —  
 For this was brief — I found them close together,  
 At blow and thrust; even as again they were 230  
 When you yourself did part them.  
 More of this matter cannot I report:  
 But men are men; the best sometimes forget:  
 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,  
 As men in rage strike those that wish them best,  
 Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received  
 From him that fled some strange indignity,  
 Which patience could not pass.

OTH. I know, Iago,  
 Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,  
 Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee; 240  
 But never more be officer of mine.

*Re-enter DESDEMONA, attended*

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up!  
 I'll make thee an example.

DES. What's the matter?

OTH. All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed.  
 Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon:

*[To Montano, who is led off.]*

Lead him off.

Iago, look with care about the town,

---

224 *fall in fright]* fall into alarm, into panic.

And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.

Come, Desdemona: 't is the soldiers' life

To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife. 250

*[Exeunt all but Iago and Cassio.]*

IAGO. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CAS. Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO. Marry, heaven forbid!

CAS. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation. I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation! 257

IAGO. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: you are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his offenceless dog to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

CAS. I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive

259 *sense*] sense of feeling, sensibility. Thus the Folios; the Quartos read *offence*. The meaning is of course that a wound in the body causes more pain than a wound to the reputation.

261 *imposition*] imposture or delusion.

265 *cast in his mood*] dismissed when he was in an angry mood.

266-267 *as one would beat . . . lion*] Cf. Cotgrave, *French-Engl. Dict.*, 1611: "Batre le chien devant le lyon, *To punish a meane man in the presence, and to the terror of, a great one.*"

so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow? O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

IAGO. What was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you? 276

CAS. I know not.

IAGO. Is't possible?

CAS. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel and applause, transform ourselves into beasts! 283

IAGO. Why, but you are now well enough: how came you thus recovered?

CAS. It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

IAGO. Come, you are too severe a moraler: as the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but since it is as it is, mend it for your own good. 292

CAS. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be

---

270-272 *Drunk?* . . . *shadow*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

270 *speak parrot?*] speak as senselessly as a parrot.

287 *unperfectness*] imperfection, defect.

now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange! Every inordinate cup is unblest, and the ingredient is a devil.

IAGO. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you. 301

CAS. I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

IAGO. You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general. I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark and denotement of her parts and graces: confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested: this broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before. 315

CAS. You advise me well.

IAGO. I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

CAS. I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I

307 *denotement*] close observation; Theobald's correction of the original reading *deuotement*, an obvious misprint. "Denotements" reappears in the First Quarto reading of III, iii, 127; see note there.

313 *splinter*] unite with splints; the common usage.

*any lay*] any bet or wager.

314 *grow stronger*] elliptical for "cause it to grow stronger."

319 *I think it freely*] I willingly believe it so.

will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.

IAGO. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

CAS. Good night, honest Iago. [Exit.]

IAGO. And what's he then that says I play the villain? 325

When this advice is free I give and honest,  
 Probal to thinking, and indeed the course  
 To win the Moor again? For 't is most easy  
 The inclining Desdemona to subdue  
 In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful 330  
 As the free elements. And then for her  
 To win the Moor, were't to renounce his baptism,  
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,  
 His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,  
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
 Even as her appetite shall play the god  
 With his weak function. How am I then a villain  
 To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
 Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!  
 When devils will the blackest sins put on, 340

320 *undertake for me*] take up my cause.

326 *free*] gratis.

327 *Probal to thinking*] Plausible to the mind, reasonable to be thought of.

"Probal" is a rare contraction of "Probable."

330 *fruitful*] bountiful, benign. Cf. III, iii, 7, *infra*: "Bounteous madam."

337 *his weak function*] his weak powers or character, his weak nature.

338 *this parallel course*] this course corresponding with the circumstances.

340 *put on*] incite, instigate.

They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
As I do now: for whies this honest fool  
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,  
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,  
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,  
That she repeals him for her body's lust;  
And by how much she strives to do him good,  
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.  
So will I turn her virtue into pitch;  
And out of her own goodness make the net  
That shall enmesh them all.

350

*Enter RODERIGO*

How now, Roderigo!

ROD. I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled; and I think the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains; and so, with no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

IAGO. How poor are they that have not patience!  
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?  
Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft, 360  
And wit depends on dilatory time.  
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,  
And thou by that small hurt hast cashier'd Cassio:

341 *suggest*] tempt, prompt.

346 *repeals him*] recalls or repeats his name, talks about him again.

353 *the cry*] a common term for a pack of hounds. Roderigo here means he is a mere makeweight, a tool.



Though other things grow fair against the sun,  
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe:  
Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 't is morning;  
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.  
Retire thee; go where thou art billeted:  
Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter:  
Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit Rod.*] Two things are to be done:  
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress; 371  
I'll set her on;  
Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,  
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find  
Soliciting his wife: ay, that 's the way;  
Dull not device by coldness and delay. [*Exit.*]

---

364-365 *Though other things . . . be ripe*] Though other parts of our scheme are maturing promisingly, yet of necessity the part which happens to get the earliest opportunity of blossoming will come to fruition first, will prove the first success.

366 *By the mass*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Introth, i. e., by my troth.*

374 *jump*] just, at the very instant.



## ACT THIRD — SCENE I

### BEFORE THE CASTLE

*Enter CASSIO and some Musicians*

CASSIO



MASTERS, PLAY HERE; I  
will content your pains;  
Something that's brief; and bid  
"Good morrow, general."

*[Music.]*

*Enter Clown*

CLO. Why, masters, have your  
instruments been in Naples, that  
they speak i' the nose thus?

FIRST MUS. How, sir, how?

CLO. Are these, I pray you,  
wind-instruments?

FIRST MUS. Ay, marry, are they, sir.

CLO. O, thereby hangs a tail.

---

*play here]* It was a common custom to wake with music a bride and  
bridegroom on the morning after wedding ceremonies.

FIRST MUS. Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

CLO. Marry, sir, by many a wind-instrument that I <sup>10</sup> know. But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes your music, that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

FIRST MUS. Well, sir, we will not.

CLO. If you have any music that may not be heard, to 't again: but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

FIRST MUS. We have none such, sir.

CLO. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away: go; vanish into air; away! [*Exeunt Musicians.* <sup>20</sup>

CAS. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

CLO. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

CAS. Prithee, keep up thy quilllets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: wilt thou do this?

CLO. She is stirring, sir: if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.

CAS. Do, good my friend.

[*Exit Clown.*

<sup>4</sup> *Naples . . . nose*] Neapolitans have a drawling nasal twang, but there is possibly a reference to the disastrous effects on the nose wrought by the venereal disease, which was supposed to have originated in Naples.

<sup>12-13</sup> *for love's sake*] Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto which reads *of all loves*, a phrase of the same significance often met with in Elizabethan writers. Cf. *M. Wives*, II, ii, 103.

<sup>19-20</sup> *I'll away*] I'll leave you, have nothing more to do with you. The clown does not quit the scene at once.

<sup>23</sup> *quilllets*] niceties, verbal distinctions.

<sup>29</sup> *Do, good my friend*]. These words are omitted in the Folios.

*Enter IAGO*

In happy time, Iago.

IAGO. You have not been a-bed, then? 30

CAS. Why, no; the day had broke  
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,  
To send in to your wife: my suit to her  
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona  
Procure me some access.

IAGO. I'll send her to you presently;  
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor  
Out of the way, that your converse and business  
May be more free.

CAS. I humbly thank you for 't. [*Exit Iago.*] I never  
knew  
A Florentine more kind and honest. 40

*Enter EMILIA*

EMIL. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry  
For your displeasure; but all will sure be well.  
The general and his wife are talking of it,  
And she speaks for you stoutly: the Moor replies,  
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus  
And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom  
He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves  
you,

---

29 *In happy time*] "*À la bonne heure*," well met.

39-40 *I never knew . . . honest*] Cassio, who is himself a Florentine,  
means that he never met a kinder man, even among his own coun-  
trymen.

42 *your displeasure*] the displeasure that you have incurred.  
*sure*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *soone*.

And needs no other suitor but his likings  
To take the safest occasion by the front  
To bring you in again.

CAS. Yet, I beseech you,  
If you think fit, or that it may be done,  
Give me advantage of some brief discourse  
With Desdemona alone.

50

EMIL. Pray you, come in:  
I will bestow you where you shall have time  
To speak your bosom freely.

CAS. I am much bound to you.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen*

OTH. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;  
And by him do my duties to the senate:  
That done, I will be walking on the works;  
Repair there to me.

IAGO. Well, my good lord, I'll do 't.

OTH. This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?

GENT. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*]

---

49 *To take . . . front*] This line is omitted from the Folios.

52 *advantage*] opportunity.

55 *I am much bound to you*] The First Quarto omits this sentence.

## SCENE III—THE GARDEN OF THE CASTLE

*Enter* DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA

DES. Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do  
All my abilities in thy behalf.

EMIL. Good madam, do: I warrant it grieves my  
husband  
As if the case were his.

DES. O, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt,  
Cassio,  
But I will have my lord and you again  
As friendly as you were.

CAS. Bounteous madam,  
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,  
He's never any thing but your true servant.

DES. I know't: I thank you. You do love my lord: 10  
You have known him long; and be you well assured  
He shall in strangeness stand no farther off  
Than in a politic distance.

CAS. Ay, but, lady,  
That policy may either last so long,

---

12 *in strangeness*] in aloofness of manner. Thus the Folios. The Quartos  
read *in strangest*.

14-18 *That policy . . . service*] That policy or plan of his to keep me out  
of office may persist so long, it may either be just kept alive by slight  
and scanty considerations, or it may find increased justification in

Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,  
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,  
*That, I being absent and my place supplied,*  
My general will forget my love and service.

DES. Do not doubt that; before Emilia here  
I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee, 20  
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it  
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;  
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;  
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;  
I'll intermingle every thing he does  
With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio;  
For thy solicitor shall rather die  
Than give thy cause away.

*Enter OTHELLO and IAGO, at a distance*

EMIL. Madam, here comes my lord.

CAS. Madam, I'll take my leave. 30

DES. Nay, stay and hear me speak.

CAS. Madam, not now: I am very ill at ease,  
Unfit for mine own purposes.

DES. Well, do your discretion. [*Exit Cassio.*]

IAGO. Ha! I like not that.

OTH. What dost thou say?

---

accidental turns of events, to such an extent that in my absence and  
with my place filled by another, the general will forget all about me,  
my loyalty and my past service.

19 *doubt*] fear.

23 *I'll watch him tame*] Falconers kept hawks awake in order to tame them  
and make them obedient.

IAGO. Nothing, my lord: or if — I know not what.

OTH. Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

IAGO. Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,  
That he would steal away so guilty-like, 40  
Seeing you coming.

OTH. I do believe 't was he.

DES. How now, my lord!

I have been talking with a suitor here,  
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

OTH. Who is 't you mean?

DES. Why, your Lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,  
If I have any grace or power to move you,  
His present reconciliation take;  
For if he be not one that truly loves you,  
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning, 50  
I have no judgement in an honest face:  
I prithee, call him back.

OTH. Went he hence now?

DES. Ay, sooth; so humbled,  
That he hath left part of his grief with me,  
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

OTH. Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

DES. But shall 't be shortly?

OTH. The sooner, sweet, for you.

DES. Shall 't be to-night at supper?

OTH. No, not to-night.

DES. To-morrow dinner then?

---

48 *His present reconciliation*] The submission he now makes with a view  
to reconciliation.

50 *in cunning*] on purpose, knowingly.



OTH. I shall not dine at home;  
I meet the captains at the citadel. 60

DES. Why then to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;  
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:  
I prithee, name the time; but let it not  
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;  
And yet his trespass, in our common reason —  
Save that, they say, the wars must make examples  
Out of their best — is not almost a fault  
To incur a private check. When shall he come?  
Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul,  
What you would ask me, that I should deny, 70  
Or stand so mammering on. What! Michael Cassio,  
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly  
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do  
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much —

OTH. Prithee, no more: let him come when he  
will;  
I will deny thee nothing.

DES. Why, this is not a boon;  
'T is as I should entreat you wear your gloves,  
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,  
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit 80  
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit  
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,

---

67 *their best*] Rowe's emendation of the original reading *her best*.  
*is not . . . fault*] hardly amounts to such a fault as.

71 *mammering*] muttering hesitatingly.

82 *touch*] test, apply the touchstone to.

It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,  
And fearful to be granted.

OTH. I will deny thee nothing:  
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this  
To leave me but a little to myself.

DES. Shall I deny you? no: farewell, my lord.

OTH. Farewell, my Desdemona: I'll come to thee  
straight.

DES. Emilia, come. Be as your fancies teach you;  
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

90

[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*]

OTH. Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,  
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,  
Chaos is come again.

IAGO. My noble lord, —

OTH. What dost thou say, Iago?

IAGO. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,  
Know of your love?

OTH. He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?

IAGO. But for a satisfaction of my thought;  
No further harm.

OTH. Why of thy thought, Iago?

83 *full of poise and difficult weight*] of great moment and of heavy burden.  
Thus the Folios. "Poise" and "weight" mean so much the same  
thing that the First Quarto reading *difficultly* for *difficult weight* is  
worthy of consideration.

91 *Excellent wretch*] Excellent little woman; "wretch" is frequently  
a term of endearment, like "fool."

92-93 *I do love . . . Chaos is come again*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 1019-  
1020: "For he being dead, with him is beauty slain, And, beauty  
dead, black chaos comes again."

97 *He did, from first to last*] Cf. I, ii, 52, *supra*, and note.

IAGO. I did not think he had been acquainted with  
her. 100

OTH. O, yes, and went between us very oft.

IAGO. Indeed!

OTH. Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in  
that?

Is he not honest?

IAGO. Honest, my lord!

OTH. Honest! ay, honest.

IAGO. My lord, for aught I know.

OTH. What dost thou think?

IAGO. Think, my lord!

OTH. Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me, 110  
As if there were some monster in his thought  
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something:  
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,  
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?  
And when I told thee he was of my counsel  
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst "Indeed!"  
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,  
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain  
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,  
Show me thy thought. 120

IAGO. My lord, you know I love you.

OTH. I think thou dost;  
And for I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty  
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,  
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:  
For such things in a false disloyal knave

110-111 *By heaven, he echoes . . . his thought*] Thus the First Quarto.

The Folios read less graphically, *Alas, thou eccho'st . . . thy thought.*

Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just  
 They're close delations, working from the heart,  
 That passion cannot rule.

IAGO. For Michael Cassio,  
 I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.

OTH. I think so too.

IAGO. Men should be what they seem;  
 Or those that be not, would they might seem none! 131

OTH. Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO. Why then I thin' Cassio 's an honest man.

OTH. Nay, yet there's more in this:

I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,  
 As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts  
 The worst of words.

IAGO. Good my lord, pardon me:  
 Though I am bound to every act of duty,  
 I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.  
 Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false;

127 *close delations*] Thus Johnson. The First Quarto reads *close denotements*, and the First Folio and later Quartos *close dilations*. "Delations," which has been interpreted as "accusations," like the Latin "delatio," is not apparently found elsewhere in Elizabethan literature in that sense. It is only found as an alternative spelling of "dilations," i. e., delays, protractions. Probably "close delations" or "dilations" means mysterious or suspicious pauses.

128 *That passion cannot rule*] That cannot govern its emotion.

131 *Or those . . . seem none*] Or those men that be not what they seem, would they might not seem men at all, would they might have no semblance of men about them.

139-140 *are free to. Utter my thoughts?*] Thus the First Quarto, save that a comma follows *to* instead of the full stop. The Folios omit *to*. "Free" has the sense of "not bound," "free from any compulsion."

As where's that palace whereinto foul things 141  
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,  
But some uncleanly apprehensions  
Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit  
With meditations lawful?

OTH. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,  
If thou but think'st him wrong'd and makest his ear  
A stranger to thy thoughts.

IAGO. I do beseech you —  
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,  
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague 150  
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy  
Shapes faults that are not — that your wisdom yet,  
From one that so imperfectly conceits,  
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble  
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.  
It were not for your quiet nor your good,

---

143-145 *But some . . . lawful?*] But that some unclean thoughts will not hold court and sit in session along with just and good thoughts. "Leets and law-days" both mean sittings of local courts of law, which took place every half-year, to revise and enforce police regulations. Kit Sly threatens to present the alewife of Wincot "at the leet." (*T. of Shrew*, Induction, II, 90.)

149-153 *Though I perchance . . . conceits*] Inasmuch as I for my part am apt to put a bad construction upon everything (indeed I confess I have the natural infirmity which leads me to pry into scandals, and often my suspicious temper imagines faults that are non-existent), I therefore beg that a man of your good sense will take no notice of suggestions coming from one that forms such defective conjectures. "*Conceits*," appears in line 153 in all the early editions save the First Quarto, which reads *coniects*.

155 *scattering*] random.

Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,  
To let you know my thoughts.

OTH. What dost thou mean?

IAGO. Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls: 160  
Who steals my purse steals trash; 't is something,  
nothing;

'T was mine, 't is his, and has been slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him  
And makes me poor indeed.

OTH. By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;  
Nor shall not, whilst 't is in my custody.

OTH. Ha!

IAGO. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;  
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock 170  
The meat it feeds on: that cuckold lives in bliss  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;  
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er  
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

160 *immediate*] most intimate, peculiar.

170 *the green-eyed monster . . . mock*] Though yellow is the colour mainly associated with jealousy, green is also often a conventional epithet; cf. "green-eyed jealousy" in *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 110. Here "jealousy" is personified as a sort of tiger or cat, which plays with or tortures the things which give it sustenance. The jealous man sacrifices his peace by toying with all the circumstances which feed his suspicion. Theobald somewhat imprudently substitutes *make* for *mock*, the reading of all the early editions.

172 *his wronger*] his faithless wife.

174 *strongly*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *soundly*.

OTH. O misery!

IAGO. Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;  
But riches fineless is as poor as winter  
To him that ever fears he shall be poor:  
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend  
From jealousy!

OTH. Why, why is this? 180  
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the moon  
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt  
Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,  
When I shall turn the business of my soul  
To such exsufficate and blown surmises,  
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous  
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,  
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;  
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous: 190  
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw  
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;  
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;  
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;  
And on the proof, there is no more but this,  
Away at once with love or jealousy!

177 *riches*] used as a singular. Cf. II, i, 83, *supra*.

*fineless*] endless; a word not known elsewhere. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, i, 103: "Is this *the fine* [*i. e.*, the end] of his fines?"

*as poor as winter*] winter produces no fruits.

184 *resolved*] freed from uncertainty.

186 *exsufficate*] swollen like a bubble, inflated. The word is found nowhere else, though *exsufflate*, *i. e.*, to blow out, is met with.

190 *these are more virtuous*] these graces make addition to virtue.

IAGO. I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason  
 To show the love and duty that I bear you  
 With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,  
 Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof. 200  
 Look to your wife: observe her well with Cassio;  
 Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure:  
 I would not have your free and noble nature  
 Out of self-bounty be abused; look to 't:  
 I know our country disposition well:  
 In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks  
 They dare not show their husbands; their best con-  
 science  
 Is not to leave 't undone, but keep 't unknown.

OTH. Dost thou say so?

IAGO. She did deceive her father, marrying you; 210  
 And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,  
 She loved them most.

OTH. And so she did.

IAGO. Why, go to then;  
 She that so young could give out such a seeming,  
 To seal her father's eyes up close as oak —  
 He thought 't was witchcraft — but I am much to  
 blame;  
 I humbly do beseech you of your pardon  
 For too much loving you.

OTH. I am bound to thee for ever.

202 *secure*] careless, over-confident.

204 *self-bounty*] inherent generosity.

214 *seel*] close. Cf. I, iii, 269, *supra*, and note.

*close as oak*] close as the grain of oak. Thus all the early editions.  
*Hawk's* has been suggested for *oak*.



IAGO. I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

OTH. Not a jot, not a jot.

IAGO. I' faith, I fear it has.

I hope you will consider what is spoke 220

Comes from my love; but I do see you 're moved:

I am to pray you not to strain my speech

To grosser issues nor to larger reach

Than to suspicion.

OTH. I will not.

IAGO. Should you do so, my lord,

My speech should fall into such vile success

As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy  
friend —

My lord, I see you're moved.

OTH. No, not much moved:

I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

IAGO. Long live she so! and long live you to think so! 230

OTH. And yet, how nature erring from itself —

IAGO. Ay, there's the point: as — to be bold with  
you —

Not to affect many proposed matches

Of her own clime, complexion and degree,

Whereto we see in all things nature tends —

Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,

Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.

But pardon me: I do not in position

Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear

223 *To grosser issues*] To plainer conclusions.

226 *such vile success*] such a vile issue, end or conclusion.

236 *a will most rank*] a self-will overgrown, exuberant, ungovernable.

238 *in position*] in the way of deliberate assertion.

Her will, recoiling to her better judgement, 240  
 May fall to match you with her country forms,  
 And happily repent.

OTH. Farewell, farewell:  
 If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;  
 Set on thy wife to observe: leave me, Iago.

IAGO. [*Going*] My lord, I take my leave.

OTH. Why did I marry? This honest creature  
 doubtless

Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

IAGO. [*Re'urning*] My lord, I would I might entreat  
 your honour

To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:  
 Though it be fit that Cassio have his place, 250  
 For sure he fills it up with great ability,  
 Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,  
 You shall by that perceive him and his means:  
 Note if your lady strain his entertainment  
 With any strong or vehement importunity;  
 Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,  
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears —  
 As worthy cause I have to fear I am —  
 And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

OTH. Fear not my government. 260

---

240-242, *Her will . . . repent*] Her will, reverting to or coming under  
 the sway of her better or more fully considered judgment, may  
 come to compare you with the form or outward aspect of her fellow-  
 countrymen, and perhaps repent of her alliance with you.

253 *his means*] the way he is working (through Desdemona).

254 *strain his entertainment*] press for his readmission to service.

260 *government*] self-control.

IAGO. I once more take my leave.

[Exit.

OTH. This fellow 's of exceeding honesty,  
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,  
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,  
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,  
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind  
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black  
And have not those soft parts of conversation  
That chamberers have, or for I am declined  
Into the vale of years, — yet that's not much —  
She's gone; I am abused, and my relief  
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,  
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,  
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,  
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,  
Than keep a corner in the thing I love  
For others' uses. Yet, 't is the plague of great ones;  
Prerogativèd are they less than the base;

270

263-264 *And knows all qualities . . . Of human dealings*] And knows all dispositions . . . of human nature.

264-265 *If I do prove . . . heart-strings*] Othello is using technical terms of falconry. "Haggard," a wild or untrained hawk, is sometimes used for "courtesan." "Jesses" are the leathern thongs which bind the hawk's foot to the falconer's wrist.

266 *I'd whistle . . . wind*] Falconers were wont to whistle to untameable and therefore worthless hawks and so induce them to leave the leash, and fly away with the wind, thus abandoning them for good. Hawks only returned to the falconer's hand when they were let fly against the wind.

268 *parts*] gifts, endowments.

269 *chamberers*] haunTERS of drawing-rooms.

278 *Prerogativèd . . . base*] They have smaller prerogatives or privileges than men in low positions.

'T is destiny unshunnable, like death:  
 Even then this forked plague is fated to us  
 When we do quicken. Desdemona comes:

280.

*Re-enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!  
 I'll not believe 't.

DES. How now, my dear Othello!  
 Your dinner, and the generous islanders  
 By you invited, do attend your presence.

OTH. I am to blame.

DES. Why do you speak so faintly?  
 Are you not well?

OTH. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

DES. Faith, that's with watching; 't will away again:  
 Let me but bind it hard, within this hour  
 It will be well.

290

OTH. Your napkin is too little;  
*[He puts the handkerchief from him; and she drops it.]*  
 Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

DES. I am very sorry that you are not well.

*[Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.]*

EMIL. I am glad I have found this napkin:  
 This was her first remembrance from the Moor:  
 My wayward husband hath a hundred times  
 Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,

280 *this forked plague*] this plague of conjugal infidelity, which causes  
 forked horns to sprout on the deceived husband's head.

281 *When we do quicken*] When we are born.

284 *generous islanders*] noblemen or gentry of the island.

291 *napkin*] handkerchief.

295 *remembrance*] souvenir.

For he conjured her she should ever keep it,  
That she reserves it evermore about her  
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out, 300  
And give 't Iago: what he will do with it  
Heaven knows, not I;  
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

*Re-enter IAGO*

IAGO. How now! what do you here alone?

EMIL. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

IAGO. A thing for me? it is a common thing —

EMIL. Ha!

IAGO. To have a foolish wife.

EMIL. O, is that all? What will you give me now  
For that same handkerchief?

IAGO. What handkerchief? 310

EMIL. What handkerchief!

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;  
That which so often you did bid me steal.

IAGO. Hast stol'n it from her?

EMIL. No, faith; she let it drop by negligence,  
And, to the advantage, I being here took 't up.  
Look, here it is.

IAGO. A good wench; give it me.

EMIL. What will you do with 't, that you have been  
so earnest  
To have me filch it?

---

300 *the work ta'en out*] the embroidery copied. Cf. III, iv, 181, *infra*,

"Take me this work out," and IV, i, 148, *seq.*

316 *to the advantage*] on the opportunity, in the nick of time.

IAGO. [*Snatching it*] Why, what's that to you?

EMIL. If 't be not for some purpose of import, 320  
Give't me again: poor lady, she 'll run mad  
When she shall lack it.

IAGO. Be not acknown on 't; I have use for it.  
Go, leave me. [*Exit Emilia.*]

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,  
And let him find it. Truths light as air  
Are to the jealous confirmations strong  
As proofs of holy writ: this may do something.  
The Moor already changes with my poison:  
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons, 330  
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,  
But with a little act upon the blood  
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so:  
Look, where he comes!

*Re-enter OTHELLO*

Not poppy, nor mandragora,  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou owedst yesterday.

OTH. Ha! ha! false to me?

IAGO. Why, how now, general! no more of that.

OTH. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the  
rack:

---

323 *Be not acknown on't*] Know nothing about it, do not acknowledge  
that you know anything about it.

333 *I did say so*] I mean what I say, I know what I mean.

334 *mandragora*] an herb well known as a soporific or opiate.

I swear 't is better to be much abused 340  
Than but to know 't a little.

IAGO. How now, my lord!

OTH. What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?  
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:  
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;  
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:  
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,  
Let him not know't and he's not robb'd at all.

IAGO. I am sorry to hear this.

OTH. I had been happy, if the general camp,  
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body, 350  
So I had nothing known. O, now for ever  
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!  
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars  
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell,  
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,  
The royal banner and all quality,  
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!  
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats  
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit, 360  
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

IAGO. Is't possible, my lord?

OTH. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;  
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;

---

340 *much abused*] altogether deceived.

350 *Pioners*] Sappers and miners, men of the lowest military rank.

358 *circumstance*] ceremonious detail.

359 *mortal*] deadly.

Or, by the worth of man's eternal soul,  
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog  
Than answer my waked wrath!

IAGO. Is 't come to this?

OTH. Make me to see't; or at the least so prove it,  
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop  
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life! 370

IAGO. My noble lord, —

OTH. If thou dost slander her and torture me,  
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;  
On horror's lead horrors accumulate;  
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;  
For nothing canst thou to damnation add  
Greater than that.

IAGO. O grace! O heaven defend me!  
Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?  
God be wi' you; take mine office. O wretched fool,  
That livest to make thine honesty a vice! 380  
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,  
To be direct and honest is not safe.  
I thank you for this profit, and from hence  
I'll love no friend sith love breeds such offence.

OTH. Nay, stay; thou shouldst be honest.

IAGO. I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,  
And loses that it works for.

OTH. By the world,

365 *man's*] Thus the First Quarto. The Folios read *mine*.

373 *remorse*] sense of conscience. Cf. line 459, *infra*.

383 *profit*] profitable knowledge.

387-394 *By the world . . . would be satisfied*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.



I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;  
 I think that thou art just, and think thou art not:  
 I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh 390  
 As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black  
 As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,  
 Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,  
 I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

IAGO. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:  
 I do repent me that I put it to you.  
 You would be satisfied?

OTH. Would! nay, I will.

IAGO. And may: but, how? how satisfied, my lord?  
 Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?  
 Behold her topp'd?

OTH. Death and damnation! O! 400

IAGO. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,  
 To bring them to that prospect: damn them then,  
 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster  
 More than their own! What then? how then?  
 What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?  
 It is impossible you should see this,  
 Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,  
 As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross

390 *Her*] Thus the Second and later Quartos. The Folios read less  
 satisfactorily *My*.

399 *supervisor*] onlooker.

403-404 *If ever . . . their own*] If ever any other mortal eyes in addi-  
 tion to their own see their heads on the same pillow.

407 *prime*] forward, ready, eager.

408-9 *As salt . . . drunk*] As lascivious as wolves in their lusthood, and  
 (were they) thoughtless fools as licentious as ignorance or inexper-  
 ience can be when it is made drunk.

As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,  
 If imputation and strong circumstances, 410  
 Which lead directly to the door of truth,  
 Will give you satisfaction, you may have 't.

OTH. Give me a living reason she 's disloyal.

IAGO. I do not like the office:

But sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,  
 Prick'd to 't by foolish honesty and love,  
 I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately,  
 And being troubled with a raging tooth,  
 I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul, 420  
 That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:  
 One of this kind is Cassio:

In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,  
 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves;"  
 And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,  
 Cry "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,  
 As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,  
 That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg  
 Over my thigh, and sigh'd and kiss'd, and then  
 Cried "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!" 430

OTH. O monstrous! monstrous!

IAGO. Nay, this was but his dream.

OTH. But this denoted a foregone conclusion:  
 'T is a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

410 *If imputation . . . circumstances*] If inference and strong circumstantial evidence.

413 *a living reason*] a reason founded on actual fact, drawn from life.

432 *a foregone conclusion*] an antecedent experience.

433 *a shrewd doubt*] a well-founded suspicion.

IAGO. And this may help to thicken other proofs  
That do demonstrate thinly.

OTH. I'll tear her all to pieces.

IAGO. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done;  
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this;  
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief  
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

OTH. I gave her such a one; 't was my first gift. 440

IAGO. I know not that: but such a handkerchief —  
I am sure it was your wife's — did I to-day  
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

OTH. If it be that, —

IAGO. If it be that, or any that was hers,  
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

OTH. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!  
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.  
Now do I see 't is true. Look here, Iago;  
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven:  
'T is gone. 450

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!  
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne  
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,  
For 't is of aspics' tongues!

IAGO. Yet be content.

439 *Spotted*] Embroidered.

451 *cell*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *hell*.

452 *hearted throne*] throne in the heart.

453 *fraught*] burden, freight.

454 *aspics' tongues*] The "asp of the Nile," with its deadly bite is Cleopatra's instrument of suicide. The rare form "aspic" for "asp" is found in *Ant. and Cleop.*, V, ii, 291:

OTH. O, blood, blood, blood!

IAGO. Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.

OTH. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,  
Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
To the Propontic and the Hellespont; 460  
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,  
In the due reverence of a sacred vow [Kneels.  
I here engage my words.

IAGO. Do not rise yet. [Kneels.  
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,  
You elements that clip us round about,  
Witness that here Iago doth give up  
The execution of his wit, hands, heart, 470  
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,  
And to obey shall be in me remorse,  
What bloody business ever. [They rise.

457-464 *Iago . . . heaven*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

457 *the Pontic sea*] the Pontic, now the Black sea, according to Pliny and the ancient geographers, had only a flowing tide, and never ebbcd, for ever flowing into the Propontic, *i. e.*, the sea of Marimora, and the Hellespont, *i. e.*, the Bosphorus.

463 *capable*] capacious, comprehensive.

468 *clip*] embrace.

470 *execution*] exercise.

472-473 *to obey . . . business ever*] to perform what he commands shall be with me matter of conscience whatever the bloody work he orders  
For "remorse," cf. line 372, *supra*.

OTH. I greet thy love,  
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,  
And will upon the instant put thee to 't:  
Within these three days let me hear thee say  
That Cassio's not alive.

IAGO. My friend is dead; 't is done at your request:  
But let her live.

OTH. Damn her, lewd minx! O; damn her!  
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw, 480  
To furnish me with some swift means of death  
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

IAGO. I am your own for ever. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV — BEFORE THE CASTLE

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Clown*

DES. Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio  
lies?

CLO. I dare not say he lies any where.

DES. Why, man?

CLO. He's a soldier; and for one to say a soldier  
lies, is stabbing.

DES. Go to: where lodges he?

CLO. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where  
I lie.

---

475 *put thee to 't*] test you.

1 *lies*] lives, resides.

7-9 *To tell you . . . of this*] This passage is omitted from the First Quarto.

DES. Can any thing be made of this?

CLO. I know not where he lodges; and for me to 10  
devise a lodging, and say he lies here or he lies there,  
were to lie in mine own throat.

DES. Can you inquire him out and be edified by  
report?

CLO. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make  
questions and by them answer.

DES. Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him I  
have moved my lord on his behalf and hope all will be  
well.

CLO. To do this is within the compass of man's wit,  
and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [Exit.

DES. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia? 20

EMIL. I know not, madam.

DES. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse  
Full of crusadoes: and, but my noble Moor  
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness  
As jealous creatures are, it were enough  
To put him to ill thinking.

EMIL. Is he not jealous?

DES. Who, he? I think the sun where he was  
born

Drew all such humours from him.

---

12 *in mine own throat*] deliberately, wilfully.

15 *by them answer*] by the replies to my questions get information for  
my answer.

23 *crusadoes*] gold coins of Portugal, marked with a cross. They were  
moulded of three values, varying from 6s. 8d. to 9s. according to the  
size of the cross stamped upon them.

EMIL. Look, where he comes.

DES. I will not leave him now till Cassio  
Be call'd to him.

*Enter OTHELLO*

How is 't with you, my lord? 30

OTH. Well, my good lady. [*Aside*] O, hardness to dis-  
semble!

How do you, Desdemona?

DES. Well, my good lord.

OTH. Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my  
lady.

DES. It yet has felt no age nor known no sorrow.

OTH. This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:  
Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires  
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,  
Much castigation, exercise devout;  
For here 's a young and sweating devil here,  
That commonly rebels. 'T is a good hand, 40  
A frank one.

DES. You may, indeed, say so;  
For 't was that hand that gave away my heart.

OTH. A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;  
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.

33 *this hand is moist*] a moist hand was commonly held to be a sign of an  
amorous disposition, as a dry hand was held to be a sign of indiffer-  
ence to love. Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, iii, 69, and note.

35 *fruitfulness and liberal heart*] a bountiful disposition and a heart in-  
clined to licentiousness.

37 *A sequester from liberty*] A seclusion from liberty, some confinement.

44 *our new heraldry . . . hearts*] probably this line means nothing more  
than that the fashion of the present day is to offer hands insincerely

DES. I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

OTH. What promise, chuck?

DES. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

OTH. I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;  
Lend me thy handkerchief.

DES. Here, my lord.

50

OTH. That which I gave you.

DES. I have it not about me.

OTH. Not?

DES. No, indeed my lord.

OTH. That's a fault. That handkerchief  
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;  
She was a charmer, and could almost read  
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it  
'T would make her amiable and subdue my father

---

without hearts. Sir William Cornwallis in his *Essays* in 1601 lamented the novel vogue of giving hands in one direction and hearts in another. The common notion that reference is made in this line to James I's newly created order of baronets, of which "the bloody hand" was an heraldic badge, seems, unless the line be treated as an interpolation, to be inconsistent with the fact that the creation of baronets only began in 1611, fully six years after this play was written.

46 *chuck*] a term of endearment.

48 *sorry rheum*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *sullen rheum*, i. e., an obstinately troublesome cold.

55-56 *That handkerchief . . . give*] Othello gives a different account of the handkerchief, V, ii, 219-220, *infra*, where he describes it as "an antique token My father gave my mother." The discrepancy may be an oversight on Shakespeare's part; but more probably Othello is inventing the present story in order to impress and alarm his wife.

56 *an Egyptian*] a gipsy.

57 *charmer*] a practiser of enchantments, a witch.



Entirely to her love, but if she lost it 60  
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye  
 Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt  
 After new fancies: she dying gave it me,  
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,  
 To give it her. I did so: and take heed on 't;  
 Make it a darling like your precious eye;  
 To lose 't or give 't away were such perdition  
 As nothing else could match.

DES. Is 't possible?

OTH. 'T is true: there's magic in the web of it:  
 A sibyl, that had number'd in the world 70  
 The sun to course two hundred compasses,  
 In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;  
 The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;  
 And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful  
 Conserved of maidens' hearts.

DES. Indeed! is 't true?

OTH. Most veritable; therefore look to 't well.

DES. Then would to God that I had never seen 't!

OTH. Ha! wherefore?

DES. Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

65 *give it her*] give it to my wife.

70 *sibyl*] According to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Cumæan Sibyl had lived seven centuries, and was to live three hundred years more. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, ii, 95: "If I live to be as old as Sibylla." Here a sibyl's age is reckoned at two hundred years or compasses of the sun's course. "The sun to course" is a harsh construction. But cf. such a phrase as "I counted the clock to *strike* four."

74 *mummy*] The liquid oozing from Egyptian mummies, of a transparent brown colour, which painters valued highly.

OTH. Is 't lost? is 't gone? speak, is it out o' the  
way? 80

DES. Heaven bless us!

OTH. Say you?

DES. It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTH. How!

DES. I say, it is not lost.

OTH. Fetch 't, let me see it.

DES. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.

This is a trick to put me from my suit:

Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTH. Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives. 90

DES. Come, come;

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

OTH. The handkerchief!

DES. I pray, talk me of Cassio.

OTH. The handkerchief!

DES. A man that all his time

Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,

Shared dangers with you, —

OTH. The handkerchief!

DES. In sooth, you are to blame.

OTH. Away!

[Exit.

EMIL. Is not this man jealous?

100

DES. I ne'er saw this before.

Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief:

I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

---

82 *Say you?*] What are you saying?

93-94 *I pray . . . handkerchief*] These words are found only in the  
First Quarto.

EMIL. 'T is not a year or two shows us a man:  
They are all but stomachs and we all but food;  
They eat us hungrily, and when they are full  
They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband.

*Enter CASSIO and IAGO*

IAGO. There is no other way; 't is she must do 't:  
And, lo, the happiness! go and importune her.

DES. How now, good Cassio! what's the news with  
you? 110

CAS. Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you  
That by your virtuous means I may again  
Exist, and be a member of his love  
Whom I with all the office of my heart  
Entirely honour: I would not be delay'd.  
If my offence be of such mortal kind,  
That nor my service past nor present sorrows  
Nor purposed merit in futurity  
Can ransom me into his love again,  
But to know so must be my benefit; 120  
So shall I clothe me in a forced content  
And shut myself up in some other course  
To fortune's alms.

DES. Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!

106 *hungerly*] ravenously.

109 *the happiness*] the happy chance, the good luck.

121-123 *So shall . . . alms*] So shall I have to content myself on compulsion and devote myself to some other course of life, waiting for such relief as the accidental hand of charity may offer. *Shut* is the reading of all the early editions save the First Quarto, which has *shoote*, a difficult word to explain here.

My advocacy is not now in tune;  
 My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him  
 Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.  
 So help me every spirit sanctified,  
 As I have spoken for you all my best  
 And stood within the blank of his displeasure  
 For my free speech! You must awhile be patient: 130  
 What I can do I will; and more I will  
 Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

IAGO. Is my lord angry?

EMIL. He went hence but now,  
 And certainly in strange unquietness.

IAGO. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,  
 When it hath blown his ranks into the air,  
 And, like the devil, from his very arm  
 Puff'd his own brother; and can he be angry?  
 Something of moment then: I will go meet him:  
 There's matter in 't indeed if he be angry. 140

DES. I prithee, do so.

[Exit Iago.]

Something sure of state,  
 Either from Venice or some unhatch'd practice  
 Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,  
 Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases

124 *advocation*] advocacy; a rare word.

126 *in favour*] in look, in countenance.

129 *within the blank*] full within the range. The "blank" was the white mark on the centre of the target.

138 *Puff'd his own brother*] There is aposiopesis here. Some words like "yet he stood unruffled" are understood after *brother*.

142 *unhatch'd practice*] unrevealed or undeveloped plot or conspiracy.

144 *puddled*] clouded or muddled.

Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,  
 Though great ones are their object. 'T is even so;  
 For let our finger ache, and it indues  
 Our other healthful members even to that sense  
 Of pain: nay, we must think men are not gods,  
 Nor of them look for such observancy 150  
 As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
 I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,  
 Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;  
 But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,  
 And he's indicted falsely.

EMIL. Pray heaven it be state-matters, as you think,  
 And no conception nor no jealous toy  
 Concerning you.

DES. Alas the day, I never gave him cause!

EMIL. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so. 160  
 They are not ever jealous for the cause,  
 But jealous for they are jealous: 't is a monster  
 Begot upon itself, born on itself.

DES. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

EMIL. Lady, amen.

DES. I will go seek him. Cassio, walk hereabout:  
 If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,  
 And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

CAS. I humbly thank your ladyship.

*[Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.]*

150 *observancy*] watchful attendance.

152 *unhandsome warrior*] ungenerous assailant; a reminiscence of  
 Othello's "my sweet warrior" (II, i, 180, *supra*).

157 *jealous toy*] suspicious fancy.

*Enter BIANCA*

BIAN. Save you, friend Cassio! 170

CAS. What make you from home?  
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?  
I' faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

BIAN. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.  
What, keep a week away? seven days and nights?  
Eight score eight hours<sup>2</sup> and lovers' absent hours,  
More tedious than the dial eight score times?  
O weary reckoning!

CAS. Pardon me, Bianca:  
I have this while with leader thoughts been press'd;  
But I shal' in a more continue time  
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca, 180  
[*Giving her Desdemona's handkerchief.*]

Take me this work out.

BIAN. O Cassio, whence came this?  
This is some token from a newer friend:  
To the felt absence now I feel a cause:  
Is't come to this? Well, well.

CAS. Go to, woman!  
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,  
From whence you have them. You are jealous now  
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance:  
No, by my faith, Bianca.

179 *continue*] continuous, uninterrupted, unbroken. Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto, which gives *convenient*.

181 *Take me this work out*] Copy this embroidery for me. Cf. III, iii, 300, *supra*.

BIAN. Why, whose is it?

CAS. I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.  
I like the work well: ere it be demanded — 190  
As like enough it will — I 'ld have it copied:  
Take it, and do 't; and leave me for this time.

BIAN. Leave you! wherefore?

CAS. I do attend here on the general;  
And think it no addition, nor my wish,  
To have him see me woman'd.

BIAN. Why, I pray you?

CAS. Not that I love you not.

BIAN. But that you do not love me.  
I pray you, bring me on the way a little;  
And say if I shall see you soon at night.

CAS. 'T is but a little way that I can bring you; 200  
For I attend here: but I 'll see you soon.

BIAN. 'T is very good; I must be circumstanced.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

195 *addition*] title of credit.

196 *woman'd*] in the company of a woman.

196-197 *Why . . . love you not*] These speeches are omitted from the  
First Quarto.

202 *be circumstanced*] conform to circumstance, submit to neglect.



ACT FOURTH — SCENE I — CYPRUS

BEFORE THE CASTLE

*Enter OTHELLO and IAGO*

IAGO



WILL YOU THINK SO?

OTH. Think so, Iago!

IAGO. What,

To kiss in private?

OTH. An unauthorized kiss.

IAGO. Or to be naked with  
her friend in bed  
An hour or more, not meaning  
any harm?

OTH. Naked in bed, Iago,  
and not mean harm!

It is hypocrisy against the devil:  
They that mean virtuously and  
yet do so,

The devil their virtue tempts and they tempt heaven.

IAGO. So they do nothing, 't is a venial slip:  
But if I give my wife a handkerchief —

OTH. What then?



IAGO. Why, then, 't is hers, my lord; and being hers,  
She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.

OTH. She is protectress of her honour too:  
May she give that?

IAGO. Her honour is an essence that's not seen:  
They have it very oft that have it not:  
But for the handkerchief —

OTH. By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it:  
Thou said'st — O, it comes o'er my memory, 20  
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,  
Boding to all — he had my handkerchief.

IAGO. Ay, what of that?

OTH. That's not so good now.

IAGO. What,

If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?  
Or heard him say — as knaves be such abroad,  
Who having, by their own importunate suit,  
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,

1 *Will you think so?*] Iago has been perversely arguing, it must be assumed, that men and women may be found in compromising situations without justifying the natural suspicion of guilty intercourse.

6 *It is hypocrisy against the devil*] It is hypocrisy which cheats the devil, when persons appear to be committing sins, which they are as a matter of fact avoiding.

8 *they tempt heaven*] they try the patience of heaven (by trying how near they can go towards vice without actually succumbing to it).

17 *They have . . . it not*] They often have the outward semblances of honour, who are in reality persons of dishonour.

21-22 *the raven . . . Boding to all*] the raven, the bird of ill omen, brooded over houses infected with sickness, foreboding disaster to all inside.

23 *That's not so good now*] You are not showing your usual good sense.

Convinced or supplied them, cannot choose  
But they must blab —

OTH. Hath he said any thing?

IAGO. He hath, my lord; but be you well assured, 30  
No more than he'll unswear.

OTH. What bath he said?

IAGO. Faith, that he did — I know not what he did.

OTH. What? what?

IAGO. Lie —

OTH. With he?

IAGO. With her, or her; what you will.

OTH. Lie with her! lie on her! — We say lie on her,  
when they belie her. — Lie with her! 'Zounds, that's  
fulsome! Handkerchief — confessions — handkerchief!  
— To confess, and be hanged for his labour; first, to  
be hanged, and then to confess. I tremble at it. Nature  
would not invest herself in such shadowing passion with- 40  
out some instruction. It is not words that shakes me  
thus. Pish! Noses, ears and lips. Is't possible? —  
Confess? — Handkerchief? — O devil! [*Falls in a trance.*]

IAGO. Work on,

---

28 *Convinced or supplied them*] Overcome their reluctance or complied  
with their wish.

37-43 *To confess . . . devil*] This passage is omitted from the First  
Quarto.

38 *confess, and be hanged*] a proverbial ejaculation of impatience.

39-41 *Nature . . . instruction*] Othello here experiences sensations which  
are warnings of the apoplectic fit which immediately follows. He  
means in this passage that nature would not be likely to set up such  
paroxysm of passion, which is darkening (or casting a shadow over)  
his vision, unless she were acting on sure information.

My medicine, work ! Thus credulous fools are caught ;  
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,  
All guiltless, meet reproach. What, ho ! my lord !  
My lord, I say ! Othello !

*Enter CASSIO*

How now, Cassio !

CAS. What's the matter ?

IAGO. My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy : 50  
This is his second fit ; he had one yesterday.

CAS. Rub him about the temples.

IAGO. No, forbear ;

The lethargy must have his quiet course :  
If not, he foams at mouth, and by and by  
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs :  
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,  
He will recover straight : when he is gone,  
I would on great occasion speak with you. [*Exit Cassio.*]  
How is it, general ? have you not hurt your head ?

OTH. Dost thou mock me ?

IAGO. I mock you ! no, by heaven.  
Would you would bear your fortune like a man ! 61

OTH. A horned man's a monster and a beast.

IAGO. There's many a beast then in a populous  
city,  
And many a civil monster.

OTH. Did he confess it ?

IAGO. Good sir, be a man ;  
Think every bearded fellow that 's but yoked  
May draw with you : there 's millions now alive

That nightly lie in those unproper beds  
 Which they dare swear peculiar: your case is better.  
 O, 't is the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock, 70  
 To lip a wanton in a secure couch,  
 And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;  
 And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

OTH. O, thou art wise; 't is certain.

IAGO. Stand you awhile apart;  
 Confine yourself but in a patient list.  
 Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief —  
 A passion most unsuited such a man —  
 Cassio came hither: I shifted him away,  
 And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy;  
 Bade him anon return and here speak with me; 80  
 The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,  
 And mark the fleers, the gibes and notable scorns,  
 That dwell in every region of his face;  
 For I will make him tell the tale anew,  
 Where, how, how oft, how long ago and when  
 He hath and is again to cope your wife:

68-69 *in those . . . peculiar*] in those beds which are common property, though oath may be taken that they are the husband's exclusive possession.

71 *a secure couch*] a couch where a man's confidence in his wife's fidelity is undisturbed.

75 *in a patient list*] within the bounds of patience.

76 *here o'erwhelmed*] Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto which reads *here ere while, mad*.

77 *unsuited*] Thus the Duke of Devonshire's copy of the First Quarto. Capell's copy of the same edition reads, like the Second Quarto, *unfitting*. The Folios misprint *resulting*.

79 *your ecstasy*] your fit of epilepsy.

I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;  
Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,  
And nothing of a man.

OTH. Dost thou hear, Iago?  
I will be found most cunning in my patience; 90  
But — dost thou hear? — most bloody.

IAGO. That's not amiss;  
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?  
[Othello retires.]

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,  
A housewife that by selling her desires  
Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature  
That dotes on Cassio; as 't is the strumpet's plague  
To beguile many and be beguiled by one.  
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain  
From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.

*Re-enter CASSIO*

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;  
And his unbookish jealousy must construe 100  
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures and light behaviour,  
Quite in the wrong. How do you now, lieutenant?

CAS. The worser that you give me the addition  
Whose want even kills me.

88 *all in all in spleen*] altogether made up of spleen, which was reckoned  
the main seat of tempestuous passion.

92 *keep time*] be patient; avoid haste.

94 *housewife*] used like "hussy."

101 *unbookish*] ignorant, uninformed.

*construe*] Rowe's spelling of the Quarto reading *conster*. The Folios  
misprint *conserue*.

104 *addition*] title.

IAGO. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.  
Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,  
How quickly should you speed!

CAS. Alas, poor caitiff!

OTH. Look, now he laughs already!

IAGO. I never knew a woman love man so. 110

CAS. Alas, poor rogue! I think, i' faith, she loves me.

OTH. Now he denies it faintly and laughs it out.

IAGO. Do you hear. Cassio?

OTH. Now he importunes him  
To tell it o'er: go to; well said, well said.

IAGO. She gives it out that you shall marry her:  
Do you intend it?

CAS. Ha, ha, ha!

OTH. Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?

CAS. I marry her! what, a customer! I prithee, bear  
some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwholesome.  
Ha, ha, ha! 121

OTH. So, so, so, so: they laugh that win.

IAGO. Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

CAS. Prithee, say true.

IAGO. I am a very villain else.

OTH. Have you scored me? Well.

CAS. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is

---

114 *well said*] well done; a common usage.

118 *triumph, Roman?*] Triumphs were so closely identified with Rome  
that the use of the one word suggests the other.

119 *a customer*] a loose woman who invites custom.

126 *Have you scored me?*] Have you paid your score off me? Cf. "do  
you triumph?" l. 118, *supra*.

persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

OTH. Iago beckons me; now he begins the story. 130

CAS. She was here even now: she haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble, and, by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck —

OTH. Crying "O dear Cassio!" as it were: his gesture imports it.

CAS. So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me; so hales and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!

OTH. Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to. . 141

CAS. Well, I must leave her company.

IAGO. Before me! look, where she comes.

CAS. 'T is such another fitchew! marry, a perfumed one.

*Enter BIANCA*

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

BIAN. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work? A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the

133 *the bauble*] the trivial creature.

144 *'T is such another fitchew*] She's just like a polecat.

148-149 *take out the work*] copy the embroidery. So lines 151, 152. Cf.

III, iii, 300, and III, iv, 181, *supra*.

work? There; give it your hobby-horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't. 153

CAS. How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!

OTH. By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

BIAN. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [Exit.

IAGO. After her, after her

CAS. Faith, I must, she'll rail i' the street else.

IAGO. Will you slip there? 160

CAS. Faith, I intend so.

IAGO. Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

CAS. Pri'thee, come; will you?

IAGO. Go to; say no more. [Exit Cassio.

OTH. [Advancing] How shall I murder him, Iago?

IAGO. Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

OTH. O Iago!

IAGO. And did you see the handkerchief?

OTH. Was that mine? 170

IAGO. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

OTH. I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

IAGO. Nay, you must forget that.

OTH. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night: for she shall not live: no, my heart is turned to

---

152 *hobby-horse*] a term of contempt for a frivolous woman.



stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks. 181

IAGO. Nay, that 's not your way.

OTH. Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle: an admirable musician: O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear: of so high and plenteous wit and invention: —

IAGO. She's the worse for all this.

OTH. O, a thousand thousand times: and then, of so gentle a condition!

IAGO. Ay, too gentle. 190

OTH. Nay, that 's certain: but yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

IAGO. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

OTH. I will chop her into messes: cuckold me!

IAGO. O, 't is foul in her.

OTH. With mine officer!

IAGO. That's fouler. 199

OTH. Get me some poison, Iago; this night. I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again: this night, Iago.

IAGO. Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

---

182 *your way*] your point of view.

189 *condition*] disposition.

193-194 *If you . . . offend*] If you are so foolishly mild about her sinfulness, give her formal right to commit offence.

OTH. Good, good: the justice of it pleases: very good.

IAGO. And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker: you shall hear more by midnight.

OTH. Excellent good. [*A trumpet within.*] What trumpet is that same?

IAGO. Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico. Come from the duke: and, see, your wife is with him. 210

*Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants*

LOD. God save the worthy general!

OTH. With all my heart, sir.

LOD. The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

*[Gives him a letter.]*

OTH. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

*[Opens the letter, and reads.]*

DES. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO. I am very glad to see you, signior;

Welcome to Cyprus.

LOD. I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO. Lives, sir.

DES. Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord  
An unkind breach: but you shall make all well. 220

OTH. Are you sure of that?

DES. My lord?

OTH. [*Reads*] "This fail you not to do, as you will —"

LOD. He did not call; he's busy in the paper.

Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

---

206 *let me . . . undertaker*] let me take up your cause of quarrel with him. "Undertaker" was the title commonly bestowed on such interveners in controversy.

DES. A most unhappy one: I would do much  
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

OTH. Fire and brimstone!

DES. My lord?

OTH. Are you wise? 230

DES. What, is he angry?

LOD. May be the letter moved him;  
For, as I think, they do command him home,  
Deputing Cassio in his government.

DES. By my troth, I am glad on 't.

OTH. Indeed!

DES. My lord?

OTH. I am glad to see you mad.

DES. Why, sweet Othello?

OTH. Devil! [Striking her.

DES. I have not deserved this.

LOD. My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,  
Though I should swear I saw 't: 't is very much:  
Make her amends; she weeps.

OTH. O devil, devil! 240  
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.  
Out of my sight!

227 *atone*] reconcile.

230 *Are you wise?*] Are you prudent in talking thus? Fechter, the actor,  
assigned these words to Iago, assuming them to be a hint to Othello  
to control himself better.

242 *falls*] lets fall.

*a crocodile*] In popular natural history crocodiles were a type of de-  
ceitfulness and insincerity. Hence, feigned tears are commonly known  
as "crocodile's tears."

DES. I will not stay to offend you. [Going.]

LOD. Truly, an obedient lady:

I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

OTH. Mistress!

DES. My lord?

OTH. What would you with her, sir?

LOD. Who, I, my lord?

OTH. Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn:  
Sir, she can turn and turn, and yet go on, 250  
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;  
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,  
Very obedient. Proceed you in your tears.  
Concerning this, sir, — O well-painted passion! —  
I am commanded home. Get you away;  
I'll send for you anon. Sir, I obey the mandate,  
And will return to Venice. Hence, avaunt!

[Exit Desdemona.]

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, to-night,

I do entreat that we may sup together:

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkeys!  
[Exit.]

LOD. Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate 261  
Call all in all sufficient? This the nature  
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue  
The shot of accident nor dart of chance  
Could neither graze nor pierce?

254 *well-painted passion*] cleverly simulated passion.

260 *Goats and monkeys*] Othello recalls Iago's references to the lasciviousness of goats and monkeys, III, iii, 407, *supra*.

264 *accident . . . chance*] The distinction between these two words is not quite obvious. "Accident" may mean a personal calamity, and

IAGO. He is much changed.

LOD. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

IAGO. He's that he is: I may not breathe my censure  
What he might be: if what he might he is not,  
I would to heaven he were!

LOD. What, strike his wife!

IAGO. Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew  
That stroke would prove the worst!

LOD. Is it his use? 271  
Or did the letters work upon his blood,  
And new create this fault?

IAGO. Alas, alas!  
It is not honesty in me to speak  
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,  
And his own courses will denote him so  
That I may save my speech: do but go after,  
And mark how he continues.

LOD. I am sorry that I am deceived in him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II—A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA*

OTH. You have seen nothing, then?

EMIL. Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

OTH. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

---

"chance" a turn of fortune involving more than mere personal  
consequences.

267 *censure*] opinion.

274 *honesty*] honourable.

EMIL. But then I saw no harm, and then I heard  
Each syllable that breath made up between them.

OTH. What, did they never whisper?

EMIL. Never, my lord.

OTH. Nor send you out o' the way?

EMIL. Never.

OTH. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor  
nothing?

EMIL. Never, my lord.

10

OTH. That's strange.

EMIL. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,  
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,  
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.  
If any wretch have put this in your head,  
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!  
For if she be not honest, chaste and true,  
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives  
Is foul as slander.

OTH. Bid her come hither: go. [*Exit Emilia.*]  
She says enough: yet she's a simple bawd 20  
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,  
A closet lock and key of villanous secrets:  
And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do 't.

*Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA*

DES. My lord, what is your will?

OTH. Pray, chuck, come hither.

DES. What is your pleasure?

OTH. Let me see your eyes;  
Look in my face.

DES.                   What horrible fancy 's this?

OTH. [*To Emilia*] Some of your function, mistress,  
Leave procreants alone and shut the door;  
Cough, or cry hem, if any body come:

29

Your mystery, your mystery: nay, dispatch. [*Exit Emilia.*]

DES. Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?  
I understand a fury in your words,  
But not the words.

OTH. Why, what art thou?

DES. Your wife, my lord; your true and loyal wife.

OTH. Come, swear it, damn thyself;  
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves  
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double-damn'd;  
Swear thou art honest.

DES.                   Heaven doth truly know it.

OTH. Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell. 40

DES. To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I  
false?

OTH. O Desdemona! Away! away! away!

DES. Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?  
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?  
If haply you my father do suspect  
An instrument of this your calling back,  
Lay not your blame on me: if you have lost him,  
Why, I have lost him too.

27 *Some of your function*] Some persons practising your line of business  
(of procuress or bawd).

30 *Your mystery*] Bethink you of your trade or profession of procuress.

37-38 *Lest . . . double-damn'd*] Lest being like an angel, like one of the  
elect of heaven, the fiends of hell themselves should fear to touch  
you. Therefore heap sin upon sin, add perjury to adultery.

OTH. Had it pleased heaven  
 To try me with affliction; had they rain'd  
 All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head, 50  
 Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,  
 Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,  
 I should have found in some place of my soul  
 A drop of patience. but, alas, to make me  
 A fixed figure for the time of scorn  
 To point his slow unmoving finger at!  
 Yet could I bear that too, well, very well:  
 But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,  
 Where either I must live or bear no life,  
 The fountain from the which my current runs, 60  
 Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!  
 Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads  
 To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,

49 *they*] *sc.* the heavens.

55-56 *A fixed figure . . . finger at*] This is substantially the reading of the Quartos, though the First Quarto has *fingers* for *finger*, and *at* is followed in all by *oh, oh*. The main change in the Folios is the substitution of *The* for *A* in line 55, and of *and moving* for *unmoving* in line 56. The metaphor is drawn from a clock. "A fixed figure" refers to the small figure of a man which ornamented a clock, and sometimes played a part in the mechanism by striking a bell to sound the hours or quarter hours. Cf. *Rich. II*, V, v, 60, "I stand fooling here his *Jack o' the clock*," and *Rich. III*, IV, ii, 118, "like a *Jack* thou keep'st the stroke." "The time of scorn" means "the hour of scorn," "hour" being put for the dial or clock's face on which the hours are indicated. "Slow unmoving finger" is the dial hand or pointer with its imperceptible movement.

58 *garner'd up*] treasured, stored.

63-65 *Turn . . . as hell*] Apparently *Patience*, being apostrophised, is



Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,  
Ay, there, look grim as hell!

DES. I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTH. O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,  
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,  
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet  
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er  
been born!

70

DES. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTH. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,  
Made to write "whore" upon? What committed!  
Committed! O thou public commoner!  
I should make very forges of my cheeks,  
That would to cinders burn up modesty,  
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!  
Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;  
The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,  
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,  
And will not hear it. What committed!  
Impudent strumpet!

80

---

warned that it will change colour in presence of such filth, and that all its normal fresh beauty would become ugly as hell in view of such corruption. Othello exaggerates the beauty and virtue of patience, which could find no place in his present condition of mind.

Cherubin, used here as a singular, is really the plural of "cherub."

73 *committed!*] The word has a technical sense of doing unlawful acts of love. Cf. *Lear*, III, iv, 81: "*commit* not with man's sworn spouse."

74-77 *Committed . . . committed!*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

79 *The bawdy wind . . . meets*] Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, II, vi, 16: "*Hugg'd* and embraced by the strumpet wind."

DES. By heaven, you do me wrong.

OTH. Are not you a strumpet?

DES. No, as I am a Christian:  
If to preserve this vessel for my lord  
From any other soul unlawful touch  
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTH. What, not a whore?

DES. No, as I shall be saved.

OTH. Is 't possible?

DES. O, heaven forgive us!

OTH. I cry you mercy then:  
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice 90  
That married with Othello. [*Raising his voice*] You,  
mistress,  
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,  
And keep the gate of hell!

*Re-enter EMILIA*

You, you, ay, you!  
We have done our course; there's money for your pains:  
I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*]

EMIL. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?  
How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?

DES. Faith, half asleep.

EMIL. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

DES. With who? 100

EMIL. Why, with my lord, madam.

84 *this vessel for my lord*] an obvious scriptural reminiscence.

89 *I cry you mercy*] I beg your pardon. Cf. V, i, 69, *infra*.

92 *office opposite to Saint Peter*] office opposed to that of St. Peter, who keeps the keys of heaven.

DES. Who is thy lord?

EMIL. He that is yours, sweet lady.

DES. I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia;  
I cannot weep, nor answer have I none  
But what should go by water. Prithee, to-night  
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets: remember;  
And call thy husband hither.

EMIL. Here's a change indeed! [*Exit.*]

DES. 'T is meet I should be used so, very meet.  
How have I been behaved, that he might stick  
The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

110

*Re-enter EMILIA with IAGO*

IAGO. What is your pleasure, madam? How is 't  
with you?

DES. I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes  
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:  
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,  
I am a child to chiding.

IAGO. What's the matter, lady?

EMIL. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,  
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,  
As true hearts cannot bear.

DES. Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO. What name, fair lady?

DES. Such as she says my lord did say I was.

120

105 *go by water*] express itself in tears.

110 *opinion*] ill opinion or suspicion.

*least misuse*] slightest fault. Thus all the early editions, save the  
First Quarto, which reads *greatest abuse*.

EMIL. He call'd her whore: a beggar in his drink  
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

IAGO. Why did he so?

DES. I do not know; I am sure I am none such.

IAGO. Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

EMIL. Hath she forsook so many noble matches,  
Her father and her country and her friends,  
To be call'd whore? would it not make one weep?

DES. It is my wretched fortune.

IAGO. Beshrew him for 't!  
How comes this trick upon him?

DES. Nay, heaven doth know.

EMIL. I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain, 131  
Some busy and insinuating rogue,  
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,  
Have not devised this slander; I'll be hang'd else.

IAGO. Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.

DES. If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

EMIL. A halter pardon him! and hell gnaw his bones!  
Why should he call her whore? who keeps her com-  
pany?

What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?  
The Moor's abused by some most villanous knave, 140  
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.  
O heaven, that such companions thou'ldst unfold,

---

122 *callet*] a low prostitute.

131 *eternal*] infernal; a common term of extreme abhorrence.

132 *busy and insinuating*] officious and plausible.

133 *cogging, cozening*] lying, cheating.

141 *notorious*] outrageous, deserving to be branded. Cf. V, ii, 242, *infra*.

142 *companions*] fellows; a word of scorn.

And put in every honest hand a whip  
To lash the rascals naked through the world  
Even from the east to the west!

IAGO. Speak within door.

EMIL. O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was  
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,  
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

IAGO. You are a fool; go to.

DES. O good Iago,  
What shall I do to win my lord again? 150  
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,  
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:  
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love  
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,  
Delighted them in any other form,  
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,  
And ever will, though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorcement, love him dearly,  
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much; 160  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore":  
It doth abhor me now I speak the word;

---

145 *Speak within door*] Don't speak so loud as to be heard outside the door.

148 *suspect me with the Moor*] Cf. I, iii, 381-382, and II, i, 289-293, *supra*.

154 *discourse of thought*] range or course of thought. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 150: "*discourse of reason*."

161 *defeat*] destroy.

163 *It doth abhor me*] It is abhorrent to me.

To do the act that might the addition earn  
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

IAGO. I pray you, be content; 't is but his humour:  
The business of the state does him offence,  
And he does chide with you.

DES. If 't were no other, --

IAGO. 'T is but so, I warrant. [*Trumpets within.*]  
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper! 170  
The messengers of Venice stay the meat:  
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*]

*Enter RODERIGO*

How now, Roderigo!

ROD. I do not find that thou dealest justly with me.

IAGO. What in the contrary?

ROD. Every day thou daffest me with some device,  
Iago; and rather, as it seems to me now, keepest from  
me all conveniency than suppliest me with the least  
advantage of hope. I will indeed no longer endure it;  
nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what already  
I have foolishly suffered. 181

IAGO. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

ROD. Faith, I have heard too much; for your words  
and performances are no kin together.

164 *addition*] title.

176 *daffest me*] putttest me off.

183-184 *for your words and*] In the Duke of Devonshire's copy and in at least three other extant copies of the First Folio a careless printer has substituted for these words the phrase *and hell gnaw his bones*, thus repeating by a freak of misdirected vision Emilia's angry ejaculation

IAGO. You charge me most unjustly.

ROD. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist: you have told me she hath received them and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance; but I find none. 191

IAGO. Well; go to; very well.

ROD. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 't is not very well: by this hand, I say 't is very scurvy, and begin to find myself fopped in it.

IAGO. Very well.

ROD. I tell you 't is not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you. 200

IAGO. You have said now.

ROD. Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

IAGO. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even from this instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

---

from line 137, *supra*. In the majority of the copies of the First Folio the mistake is corrected.

188 *a votarist*] a nun.

190 *sudden respect*] prompt show of regard.

195 *fopped*] deluded, deceived; "fobbed" is the more ordinary form.

202 *intendment*] intention.

ROD. It hath not appeared.

209

IAGO. I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion is not without wit and judgement. But, Rod-rigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, I mean purpose, courage and valour, this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery and devise engines for my life.

ROD. Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass?

IAGO. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

220

ROD. Is that true? why then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

IAGO. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident: wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

ROD. How do you mean, removing of him?

IAGO. Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

ROD. And that you would have me to do?

230

IAGO. Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups to-night with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of his honourable fortune. If you will watch his going thence, which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one, you may

---

216 *devise engines . . . life*] plot to destroy my life.

232 *harlotry*] harlot. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, IV, ii, 14: "A peevish self-will'd harlotry."



take him at your pleasure: I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste: about it. 241

ROD. I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO. And you shall be satisfied. [Exeunt.

SCENE III — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants*

LOD. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

OTH. O, pardon me; 't will do me good to walk.

LOD. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

DES. Your honour is most welcome.

OTH. Will you walk, sir?

O, — Desdemona, —

DES. My lord?

OTH. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned forthwith: dismiss your attendant there: look it be done.

DES. I will, my lord.

[Exeunt Othello, Lodovico, and Attendants.

240-241 *high supper-time*] fully the hour of supper.

4 *walk*] withdraw.

EMIL. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

10

DES. He says he will return incontinent:  
He hath commanded me to go to bed,  
And bade me to dismiss you.

EMIL. Dismiss me!

DES. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,  
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:  
We must not now displease him.

EMIL. I would you had never seen him!

DES. So would not I: my love doth so approve him,  
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns, —  
Prithee, unpin me, — have grace and favour in them.

20

EMIL. I have laid those sheets you bade me on the  
bed.

DES. All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our  
minds!

If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me  
In one of those same sheets.

EMIL. Come, come, you talk.

DES. My mother had a maid call'd Barbara:  
She was in love; and he she loved proved mad  
And did forsake her: she had a song of "willow;"  
An old thing 't was, but it express'd her fortune,  
And she died singing it: that song to-night

11 *incontinent*] immediately.

22 *Good faith*] Thus the First Quarto. All other early editions read  
*absurdly good father*.

24 *you talk*] you chatter thoughtlessly.

26 *mad*] wild, fickle.

27 *a song of "willow"*] Shakespeare adapts the song, which he gives

Will not go from my mind; I have much to do 30  
 But to go hang my head all at one side  
 And sing it like poor Barbara. Prithee, dispatch.

EMIL. Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

DES. No, unpin me here.

This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMIL. A very handsome man.

DES. He speaks well.

EMIL. I know a lady in Venice would have walked  
 barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

DES. [*Singing*] The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
 Sing all a green willow; 40

Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,

Sing willow, willow, willow:

The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;

Sing willow, willow, willow;

Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;—

Lay by these:—

[*Singing*] Sing willow, willow, willow;

Prithee, hie thee; he'll come anon:—

lines 39–55, *infra*, from an old ballad, probably of early sixteenth century date. The original music is extant. Percy printed a version of the words from a copy in the Pepysian library (at Magdalene College, Cambridge), entitled “A lover’s complaint, being forsaken of his love, to a pleasant tune.” There and elsewhere the singer is a man. “Willow, willow” was a favourite burden of many other sixteenth century songs.

30–51 *I have . . . next*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

30–31 *I have much to do But to go*] I can hardly refrain from going.

[*Singing*] Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve, — 50

Nay, that's not next. Hark! who is 't that knocks?

EMIL. It's the wind.

DES. [*Singing*] I call'd my love false love; but what said he  
then?

Sing willow, willow, willow:

If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men.

So get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;

Doth that bode weeping?

EMIL. 'T is neither here nor there.

DES. I have heard it said so. O, these men, these  
men!

Dost thou in conscience think, — tell me, Emilia, —

That there be women do abuse their husbands 60

In such gross kind?

EMIL. There be some such, no question.

DES. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMIL. Why, would not you?

DES. No, by this heavenly light!

EMIL. Nor I neither by this heavenly light; I might  
do't as well i' the dark.

DES. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMIL. The world's a huge thing: it is a great price  
For a small vice.

---

49 *Sing . . . garland*] Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 193-194: "I offered him my  
company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland," etc.

53-55 *I call'd . . . men*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

55 *moe . . . moe*] more . . . more.

58-61 *I have . . . question*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

DES. In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMIL. In troth, I think I should; and undo 't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but, for the whole world, — why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for 't.

75

DES. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong For the whole world.

EMIL. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and having the world for your labour, 't is a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

DES. I do not think there is any such woman.

80

EMIL. Yes, a dozen; and as many to the vantage as would store the world they played for.  
But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us, or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite,

71 *joint-ring*] a token of troth-pledge, usually of small intrinsic value; it was first broken in two parts which were then neatly riveted together.

72 *exhibition*] allowance.

82 *to the vantage*] into the bargain.

83 *store*] stock.

84-101 *But I do think. . . us so*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

86 *treasures*] Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, iii, 42-43: "given my *treasures* and my rights of thee To . . . melancholy."

89 *having*] allowance for expenses.

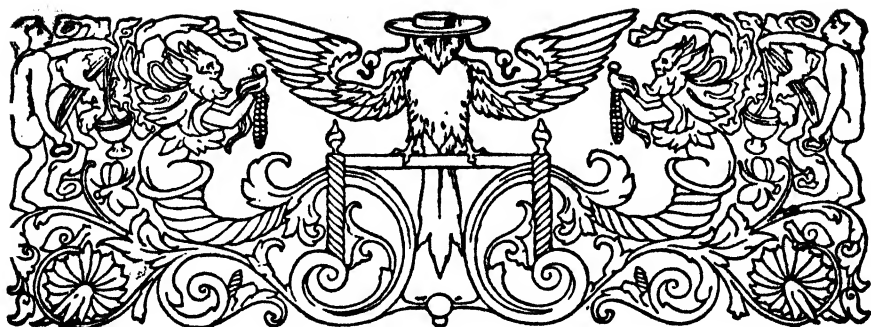
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace, 90  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth: is 't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too: and have not we affections,  
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well: else let them know, 100  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

DES. Good night, good night: heaven me such uses  
send,  
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend! [*Exeunt.*]

---

92 *sense*] sensual appetite.

102 *uses*] experiences, with a reference to Emilia's phrase, line 100, *supra*,  
"then let them *use* us."



## ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — CYPRUS

### A STREET

*Enter IAGO and RODERIGO*

IAGO



HERE, STAND BEHIND THIS  
bulk; straight will he come:  
Wear thy good rapier bare, and  
put it home:  
Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll  
be at thy elbow:  
It makes us, or it mars us; think  
on that,  
And fix most firm thy resolu-  
tion.

ROD. Be near at hand; I  
may miscarry in 't.

IAGO. Here, at thy hand: be  
bold, and take thy stand. [*Retires.*

ROD. I have no great devotion to the deed;  
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons:  
'T is but a man gone. Forth, my sword: he dies.

10

IAGO. I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,  
 And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,  
 Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,  
 Every way makes my gain: live Roderigo,  
 He calls me to a restitution large  
 Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd from him,  
 As gifts to Desdemona:  
 It must not be: if Cassio do remain,  
 He hath a daily beauty in his life  
 That makes me ugly; and besides, the Moor 20  
 May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril:  
 No, he must die. Be 't so. \* I hear him coming.

*Enter CASSIO*

ROD. I know his gait; 't is he. Villain, thou diest!

*[Makes a pass at Cassio.]*

CAS. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,

1 *bulk*] a stall or counter outside a shop. Florio in his Italian-English Dictionary explains "Balcone" as "a bulke, or stall of a shop." Cf. *Cor.*, II, i, 200: "stalls, bulks, windows." *Bulke* is the reading of the Quartos, for which the Folios substitute unsatisfactorily *Barke* or *Bark*.

7 *stand*] technically applied to the place chosen by the huntsmen for shooting at the deer.

11 *quat*] Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto, which reads *gnat*. "Quat" means in Warwickshire dialect "a pimple." It is employed here as a term of contempt, like "scab" in *Tw. Night*, II, v, 69. "Rubb'd to the sense" is rubbed to the quick, so as to make the spot or sore "angry."

14 *gain*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *game*.

16 *bobb'd*] cheated or swindled. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, III, i, 65.



But that my coat is better than thou know'st:  
I will make proof of thine. [*Draws, and wounds Roderigo.*]

ROD. O, I am slain!

[*Iago from behind wounds Cassio in the leg, and exit.*]

CAS. I am maim'd for ever. Help, ho! murder!  
murder! [*Falls.*]

*Enter OTHELLO*

OTH. The voice of Cassio: Iago keeps his word.

ROD. O, villain that I am!

OTH. It is even so.

CAS. O, help, ho! light! a surgeon! 30

OTH. 'Tis he. O brave Iago, honest and just,  
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!  
Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,  
And your unblest fate hies: strumpet, I come!  
Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;  
Thy bed lust-stain'd shall with lust's blood be spotted.  
[*Exit.*]

*Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO*

CAS. What, ho! no watch? no passage? murder!  
murder!

GRA. 'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

25 *my coat*] Cassio probably wears an undercoat of mail, *i. e.*, a tunic of finely wrought links of steel.

34 *hies*] hastes away. The Folios read *highes*, and the Quartos *hies apace*.

35 *Forth of*] Out of. Thus the Quartos; the First Folio reads *For of*, the other Folios *For off*.

37 *no passage?*] no traffic? are no persons passing by? is nobody about? Cf. *Com. of Errors*, III, i, 99: "the stirring *passage* of the day," *i. e.*, the hour when traffic is busiest.

CAS. O, help!

LOD. Hark!

40

ROD. O wretched villain!

LOD. Two or three groan: it is a heavy night:  
These may be counterfeits: let 's think 't unsafe  
To come in to the cry without more help.

ROD. Nobody come? then shall I bleed to death.

LOD. Hark!

*Re-enter IAGO. with a light*

GRA. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and  
weapons.

IAGO. Who's there? whose noise is this that cries on  
murder?

LOD. We do not know.

IAGO. Did not you hear a cry?

CAS. Here, here! for heaven's sake, help me!

IAGO. What's the matter? 50

GRA. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

LOD. The same indeed; a very valiant fellow.

IAGO. What are you here that cry so grievously?

CAS. Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!  
Give me some help.

IAGO. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done  
this?

CAS. I think that one of them is hereabout,  
And cannot make away.

---

42 *a heavy night*] a dark cloudy night.

48 *cries on*] calls out.

51 *ancient*] ensign. See note on I, i, 33, *supra*.

58 *make away*] make off, escape.

# OTHELLO

ACT V

IAGO. O treacherous villains!  
What are you there? come in and give some help.  
[To Lodovico and Gratiano.]

ROD. O, help me here! 60

CAS. That 's one of them.

IAGO. O murderous slave! O villain!  
[Stabs Roderigo.]

ROD. O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!

IAGO. Kill men i' the dark! Where be these bloody  
thieves?

How silent is this town! Ho! murder! murder!

What may you be? are you of good or evil?

LOD. As you shall prove us, praise us.

IAGO. Signior Lodovico?

LOD. He, sir.

IAGO. I cry you mercy. Here 's Cassio hurt by vil-  
lains.

GRA. Cassio! 70

IAGO. How is 't, brother?

CAS. My leg is cut in two.

IAGO. Marry, heaven forbid!

Light, gentlemen: I'll bind it with my shirt.

*Enter BIANCA*

BIAN. What is the matter, ho? who is't that cried?

IAGO. Who is 't that cried!

BIAN. O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio! O Cas-  
sio, Cassio, Cassio!

---

69 *I cry you mercy*] I beg your pardon. Cf. IV, ii, 89, *supra*.

IAGO. O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect

Who they should be that have thus mangled you?

CAS. No.

80

GRA. I am sorry to find you thus: I have been to seek you.

IAGO. Lend me a garter. SO. O, for a chair,  
To bear him easily hence!

BIAN. Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash  
To be a party in this injury.

Patience awhile, good Cassio. Come, come;  
Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?

Alas, my friend and my dear countryman

Roderigo? no:—yes, sure: O heaven! Roderigo.

90

GRA. What, of Venice?

IAGO. Even he, sir: did you know him?

GRA. Know him! ay.

IAGO. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;  
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,  
That so neglected you.

GRA. I am glad to see you.

IAGO. How do you, Cassio? O, a chair, a chair!

GRA. Roderigo!

IAGO. He, he, 't is he. [*A chair brought in.*] O, that's  
well said; the chair:

---

82-83 *Lend . . . hence*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

85 *trash*] feeble creature. Cf. II, i, 297, *supra*, and note.

86 *To be a party*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *To beare a part*.

93 *I cry . . . pardon*] I beg you kindly pardon. Cf. line 69, *supra*.

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;  
 I'll fetch the general's surgeon. [*To Bianca*] For you,  
 mistress, 100

Save you your labour. He that lies slain here, Cassio,  
 Was my dear friend: what malice was between you?

CAS. None in the world; nor do I know the man.

IAGO. [*To Bian.*] What, look you pale? O, bear him  
 out o' the air. [*Cassio and Roderigo are borne off.*]

Stay you, good gentlemen. Look you pale, mistress?

Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?

Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.

Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her:

Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,

Though tongues were out of use. 110

101 *Save you your labour*] Iago impatiently deprecates Bianca's attendance on Cassio.

105 *gentlemen*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *gentlewoman*, which has been defended on the ground that Bianca would be following her wounded lover, unless she were restrained by Iago. It is almost certain that Iago is addressing Lodovico and Gratiano, who, now that Cassio has been appointed general in Othello's place, would be bound to render him all the assistance in their power, and would only stay behind him on his removal, at a very urgent entreaty. They do not follow their wounded chief. Iago addresses them again in line 109.

106 *gastness*] ghastliness, deadly paleness. Cf. *Lear*, II, i, 55: "gasted," i. e., frightened, made aghast; *gastness* is the reading of the Folios. The Quartos read less intelligibly *ieastures*.

109-110 *guiltiness . . . of use*] Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 589-590: "For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak With most miraculous organ."

*Enter EMILIA*

EMIL. 'Las, what's the matter? what's the matter,  
husband?

IAGO. Cassio hath nere been set on in the dark  
By Roderigo, and fellows that are 'scaped:  
He 's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

EMIL. Alas, good gentelman! alas, good Cassio!

IAGO. This is the fruit of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,  
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night.  
What, do you shake at that?

BIAN. He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake  
not.

IAGO. O, did he so? I charge you, go with me. 120

EMIL. Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet!

BIAN. I am no strumpet; but of life as honest  
As you that thus abuse me.

EMIL. As I! foh! fie upon thee!

IAGO. Kind gentlemen, let 's go see poor Cassio  
dress'd.

Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale.

Emilia, run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd!

Will you go on? I pray. [*Aside*] This is the night

That either makes me or fordoes me quite. [*Exeunt.*

117 *Go know . . . to-night*] This apparent ignorance of Iago as to where Cassio supped is inconsistent with much that has gone before, and must be intended to mystify Emilia as to his own share in recent events. Cassio at IV, i, 160, *supra*, tells Iago he intends to sup with Bianca, and Iago at IV, ii, 232, *supra*, arranges with Roderigo to fetch him from Bianca's house.

129 *fordoes*] ruins, destroys.

## SCENE II — A BEDCHAMBER IN THE CASTLE *DESDEMONA IN BED ASLEEP — A LIGHT BURNING*

*Enter OTHELLO*

OTH. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:  
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!  
 It is the cause. Yet I 'll not shed her blood,  
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow  
 And smooth as monumental alabaster.  
 Yet she must die, else she 'll betray more men.  
 Put out the light, and then put out the light:  
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
 I can again thy former light restore,  
 Should I repent me: but once put out thy light, 10

1 *It is the cause*] Much has been written on the precise meaning of these words here. Othello is justifying to himself his design of murdering his wife, by laying stress on the heinousness of her offence, which demands the sacrifice of her life in the cause of justice. Cf. line 17, *infra*. It is the monstrousness of the crime, he tells his soul, which is the cause and justification of his terrible act of vengeance.

2 *chaste stars*] This epithet is rarely applied to the stars, though commonly applied to the moon, who is often identified with Diana, the goddess of chastity. But it is a natural epithet to apply to the bright, pure stellar light.

5 *monumental alabaster*] alabaster was the ordinary material of monumental tombs.

7 *Put out . . . light*] Put out the candle, and then put out the light of life. In Othello's excited temper the trivial words of the first half of the line "Put out the light" are invested on their involuntary repetition with a terrible significance. This punctuation is that of





Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,  
Solicit for it straight.

DES. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that? 30

OTH. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:  
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;  
No; heaven forfend! I would not kill thy soul.

DES. Talk you of killing?

OTH. Ay, I do.

DES. Then heaven have mercy on me!

OTH. Amen, with all my heart!

DES. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

OTH. Hum!

DES. And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then 40  
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know  
not,

Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.

OTH. Think on thy sins.

DES. They are loves I bear to you.

OTH. Ay, and for that thou diest.

DES. That death's unnatural that kills for loving.

Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?  
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:  
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,  
They do not point on me.

OTH. Peace, and be still!

31 *walk by*] walk apart, aside.

33 *heaven forfend*] heaven forbid.

45 *That death's . . . loving*] Cf. *Rich. III*, I, ii, 134-135: "It is a quarrel most unnatural, To be revenged on him that loveth you."

49 *point on*] refer to, concern. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, I, iii, 31-32: "they are portentous things Unto the climate that they *point upon*."

DES. I will so. What 's the matter?

50

OTH. That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee

'Thou gavest to Cassio.

DES. No, by my life and soul!  
Send for the man, and ask him.

OTH. Sweet soul, take heed,  
Take heed of perjury; thou art on thy death-bed.

DES. Ay, but not yet to die.

OTH. Yes, presently:  
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;  
For to deny each article with oath  
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception  
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

DES. Then Lord have mercy on me!

OTH. I say, amen. 60

DES. And have you mercy too! I never did  
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio  
But with such general warranty of heaven  
As I might love: I never gave him token.

OTH. By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.  
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,  
And makest me call what I intend to do

---

55 *presently*] immediately, at once.

66 *my heart*] Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto which reads  
*thy heart*.

67-68 *makest . . . sacrifice*] Othello means that what he judges to be  
Desdemona's perjury is hardening his heart, and filling his soul with  
the pitiless rage of a murderer, instead of with the calmness of a  
priest engaged in sacrificial offering, which it was his intention to  
maintain.

A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:  
I saw the handkerchief.

DES. He found it then;  
I never gave it him: send for him hither;  
Let him confess a truth.

70

OTH. He hath confess'd.

DES. What, my lord?

OTH. That he hath used thee.

DES. How? unlawfully?

OTH. Ay.

DES. He will not say so.

OTH. No, his mouth is stopp'd;  
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for 't.

DES. O, my fear interprets! what, is he dead?

OTH. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge  
Had stomach for them all.

DES. Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone! 80

OTH. Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my  
face?

DES. O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

OTH. Down, strumpet!

DES. Kill me to-morrow; let me live to-night!

OTH. Nay, if you strive, —

DES. But half an hour!

OTH. Being done, there is no pause.

DES. But while I say one prayer!

---

76 *hath ta'en order for 't]* has arranged, taken the necessary steps, for that.

86 *Being done . . . pause]* The resolution being irrevocable, and the act being practically done, there is no possibility of delay.

OTH. It is too late. [*He stifles her.*]

EMIL. [*Within*] My lord, my lord! what, ho! my lord,  
my lord!

OTH. What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite  
dead?

I that am cruel am yet merciful;

90

I would not have thee linger in thy pain:

So, so.

EMIL. [*Within*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

OTH. Who's there?

EMIL. [*Within*] O, good my lord, I would speak a  
word with you:

OTH. Yes: 't is Emilia. By and by. She's dead.

'T is like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.

The noise was here. Ha! no more moving?

Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were 't good?

I think she stirs again. No. What's best to do?

If she come in, she 'll sure speak to my wife:

My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.

100

O, insupportable! O heavy hour!

Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse

---

87 *It is too late*] Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto, which inserts here a cry from Desdemona's lips, *O Lord, Lord, Lord.*

92 *So, so*] Steevens suggested, and many actors adopt the suggestion, that at these words Othello stabs Desdemona, so as to put her out of her pain. Nothing in the text justifies this conjecture. Othello doubtless presses the pillow down again on Desdemona's face with convulsive energy, or perhaps grasps her neck in order to stop her breathing. Though a fatal fracture of the larynx seems to be the result, it is not inconsistent with medical experience that she should yet be able to gasp out a few sentences. See note on line 120, *infra*.

# OTHELLO

ACT V

Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe  
Should yawn at alteration.

EMIL. [Within] I do beseech you  
That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!

OTH. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia.  
Soft; by and by. Let me the curtains draw.

Where art thou? [Unlocks the door.]

Enter EMILIA

What's the matter with thee now?

EMIL. O, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!

OTH. What, now? 110

EMIL. But now, my lord.

OTH. It is the very error of the moon;  
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont  
And makes men mad.

EMIL. Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian  
Call'd Roderigo.

OTH. Roderigo kill'd!  
And Cassio kill'd!

EMIL. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

OTH. Not Cassio kill'd! then murder's out of tune,  
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

DES. O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

---

104 *Should yawn at alteration*] Should be riven asunder under stress of catastrophic revolution. "Yawn" is used as in "yawning chasm."

112 *the very error*] the mere deviation of the moon from its true course. Lunacy, as the word implies, was supposed to be due to irregular movements of the moon.

120 *O, falsely, . . . murder'd!*] Much has been written on the impossibility of Desdemona speaking these lines and of the lines 125, 127, 128

EMIL.

Alas, what cry is that?

OTH. That! what?

121

EMIL. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice.

Help! help, ho! help! O lady, speak again!

Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

DES. A guiltless death I die.

EMIL. O, who hath done this deed?

DES. Nobody; I myself. Farewell:

Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell! [Dies.]

OTH. Why, how should she be murder'd?

EMIL.

Alas, who knows?

OTH. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

130

EMIL. She said so: I must needs report the truth.

OTH. She 's like a liar gone to burning hell:

'T was I that kill'd her.

EMIL.

O, the more angel she,

And you the blacker devil!

OTH. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

EMIL. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

OTH. She was false as water.

EMIL.

Thou art rash as fire, to say

That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!

OTH. Cassio did top her; ask thy husband else.

O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,

140

---

subsequently assigned to her, after Othello's strangulation of her.  
But a momentary revival before actual death is not impossible from  
a medical point of view. See note on line 92, *supra*.

133 *the more angel she*] Thus Emilia pays tribute to Desdemona's dying  
falsehood.

135 *folly*] lasciviousness, immoral indulgence.

But that I did proceed upon just grounds  
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

EMIL. My husband!

OTH. Thy husband.

EMIL. That she was false to wedlock?

OTH. Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,  
If heaven would make me such another world  
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,  
I'd not have sold her for it.

EMIL. My husband!

OTH. Ay, 't was he that told me first:  
An honest man he is, and hates the slime 151  
That sticks on filthy deeds.

EMIL. My husband!

OTH. What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy  
husband.

EMIL. O mistress, villany hath made mocks with  
love!

My husband say that she was false!

OTH. He, woman;  
I say thy husband: dost understand the word?  
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

EMIL. If he say so, may his pernicious soul

148 *chrysolite*] a rare kind of topaz or jasper, said to be of a greenish hue.

153 *iteration*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *utterance*, which improves the metre. For the form "itterance" or "iterance," cf. the Folio reading *Reprobance* at line 212, *infra*, where the First Quarto reads *Reprobation*.

154-157 *O mistress . . . honest Iago*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

154 *villany . . . love*] villany has taken advantage of or played tricks with love.

Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart:  
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

160

OTH. Ha!

EMIL. Do thy worst:  
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven  
Than thou wast worthy her.

OTH. Peace, you were best.

EMIL. Thou hast not half that power to do me harm  
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!  
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed —  
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,  
Though I lost twenty lives. Help! help, ho! help!  
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murder! murder! 170

*Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, IAGO, and others*

MON. What is the matter? How now, general!

EMIL. O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,  
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

GRA. What is the matter?

EMIL. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:  
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false:  
I know thou didst not, thou 'rt not such a villain.  
Speak, for my heart is full.

IAGO. I told him what I thought, and told no more  
Than what he found himself was apt and true. 180

EMIL. But did you ever tell him she was false?

IAGO. I did.

166 *As I have to be hurt*] As I have (the power) to endure any hurt you  
can inflict on me.

180 *apt*] to the purpose, accurate.



EMIL. You told a lie, an odious, damned lie;  
Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie!  
She false with Cassio! Did you say with Cassio?

IAGO. With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your  
tongue.

EMIL. I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to  
speak:

My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed, —

ALL. O heavens forfend!

EMIL. And your reports have set the murder on. 190

OTH. Nay, stare not, masters: it is true indeed.

GRA. 'T is a strange truth.

MON. O monstrous act!

EMIL. Villany, villany, villany!

I think upon 't: I think: I smell 't: O villany!

I thought so then: I 'll kill myself for grief:

O villany, villany!

IAGO. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you  
home.

EMIL. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak:  
'T is proper I obey him, but not now.

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home. 200

OTH. O! O! O! [*Falling on the bed.*]

EMIL. Nay, lay thee down and roar;

---

186 *charm your tongue*] silence your tongue, put your tongue under a  
spell of silence.

188–196 *My mistress . . . O villany, villany!*] These lines are omitted  
from the First Quarto.

195 *I thought so then*] When Emilia gave the handkerchief to Iago, she  
suspected he wanted it for no honest purpose. See III, iii, 320, *supra*.

For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent  
That e'er did lift up eye.

OTH. [Rising] O, she was foul!  
I scarce did know you, uncle: there lies your niece,  
Whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopp'd:  
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

GRA. Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead:  
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief  
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,  
This sight would make him do a desperate turn, 210  
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,  
And fall to reprobation.

OTH. 'Tis pitiful; but yet Iago knows  
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame  
A thousand times committed; Cassio confess'd it:  
And she did gratify his amorous works  
With that recognizance and pledge of love  
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand:  
It was a handkerchief, an antique token  
My father gave my mother. 220

208 mortal] deadly, fatal.

211 curse his better angel from his side] Cf. Sonnet cxliv, 5-6: "my female  
evil Tempteth my better angel from my side."

212 to reprobation] into eternal perdition. Thus the Quartos. The  
Folios read to Reprobance. Both terms are familiar in Calvinistic  
theology, and their significance survives in the colloquial term "repro-  
bate." For the forms "reprobance" and "reprobation" cf. the Folio  
reading *itterance* and the Quarto reading *iteration* at line 153, *supra*.

216 gratify] show gratitude for, reward.

217 recognizance] recognition, acknowledgment.

219-220 It was . . . my mother] See note on III, iv, 55-56, *supra*, where

EMIL. O heaven! O heavenly powers!

IAGO. 'Zounds! hold your peace.

EMIL. 'T will out, 't will out. I peace!

No, I will speak as liberal as the north:

Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,

All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

IAGO. Be wise, and get you home.

EMIL. I will not.

[*Iago offers to stab Emilia.*

Fie!

GRA.

Your sword upon a woman!

EMIL. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of

I found by fortune and did give my husband;

For often with a solemn earnestness,

230

More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle,

He begg'd of me to steal it.

IAGO. Villanous whore!

EMIL. She give it Cassio! no, alas, I found it,

And I did give 't my husband.

IAGO. Filth, thou liest!

EMIL. By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.

O murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool

Do with so good a wife?

---

Othello gives another account of the early history of the handkerchief, where it is stated that an "Egyptian charmer" gave it his mother.

223 *liberal as the north*] as free and as unrestrained as a blast of the north wind. All the early editions read *north*, save the First Quarto, which has *ayre*. Cf. *Cymb.*, I, iii, 36-37: "And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north, Shakes all our buds from growing."

OTH. Are there no stones in heaven  
But what serve for the thunder? Precious villain!

[*He runs at Iago: Iago, from behind, stabs Emilia, and exit.*]

GRA. The woman falls: sure, he hath kill'd his wife.

EMIL. Ay, ay: O, lay me by my mistress' side. 240

GRA. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

MON. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this  
weapon,

Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:

Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,

But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,

For 't is a damned slave. [*Exeunt all but Othello and Emilia.*]

OTH. I am not valiant neither,

But every puny whipster gets my sword.

But why should honour outlive honesty?

Let it go all.

EMIL. What did thy song bode, lady?

HERK, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan, 250

237-238 *Are there no stones . . . thunder*] Can heaven not spare one bolt for this villain? is it all needed for thunder? Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, I, iii, 49, "the *thunderstone*" [*i. e.*, thunderbolt], and *Cymb.*, IV, ii, 272, "the all-dreaded *thunder-stone*."

238 *Precious*] Thus all the old editions, save the Second and Third Quartos, which read *pernitious*.

242 *notorious*] colloquially used much like "egregious" or "outrageous." Cf. IV, ii, 141, *supra*.

247 *whipster*] "whipper-snapper;" a term of contempt.

248 *honour . . . honesty*] Othello is thinking of his own valour and his wife's proven chastity.

249-251 *What did . . . willow*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

250 *I will play the swan*] The ancient superstition that the swan sings for the first time in death is constantly noticed by classical writers and by sixteenth-century English poets. Shakespeare mentions it

# OTHELLO

## ACT V

And die in music. [Singing] Willow, willow, willow.  
 Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;  
 So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;  
 So speaking as I think, I die, I die. [Dies.]

OTH. I have another weapon in this chamber;  
 It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper. —  
 O, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.

GRA. [Within] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear:  
 Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

OTH. Look in upon me then, and speak with me, 260  
 Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

*Re-enter GRATIANO*

GRA. What is the matter?

OTH. Behold, I have a weapon;  
 A better never did itself sustain  
 Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day  
 That with this little arm and this good sword  
 I have made my way through more impediments  
 Than twenty times your stop: but, O vain boast!  
 Who can control his fate? 't is not so now.

many times. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 44-45: "he makes a swan-like end Fading in music."

256 *It is a sword of Spain . . . temper*] The best swords came from Spain, and more especially from Bilboa or Toledo. The steel blades were tempered by plunging the steel while it was red-hot into ice-cold water. Martial (*Epigrams*, Bk. i, 49, 12, and iv, 55, 15) mentions that the icy-cold temperature of the Spanish river Xalon effectively tempered steel if it were plunged into it when it was red-hot.

261 *naked*] *sc.* of arms, unarmed.

267 *your stop*] your power of resistance.

Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;  
 Here is my journey's end, here is my butt 270  
 And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.  
 Do you go back dismay'd? 't is a lost fear:  
 Man but a rush against Othello's breast,  
 And he retires. Where shou'd Othello go?  
 Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!  
 Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,  
 This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,  
 And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!  
 Even like thy chastity. O cursed slave!  
 Whip me, ye devils, 280  
 From the possession of this heavenly sight!  
 Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!  
 Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!  
 O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead!  
 Oh! Oh! Oh!

269-275] *Be not . . . wench!*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

270 *butt*] goal, target of an archer.

271 *sea-mark*] beacon at sea; cf. *Cor.*, V, iii, 74: "Like a great *sea-mark*."

272 *lost*] useless, profitless.

273 *Man but a rush*] Direct or aim so weak a weapon as a reed or rush.

275 *wench*] often used as a term of endearment.

276 *at compt*] at the day of reckoning or judgment.

282 *Blow . . . winds*] Cf. Claudio's speech in *Meas. for Meas.*, III, i, 125-127: "To be imprison'd in the viewless *winds* And blown with restless violence round about The pendent world."

284-285 *O Desdemona! . . . Oh! Oh! Oh!*] Thus substantially the Quartos. The First Folio reads, *Oh Desdemona! dead Desdemona: dead. Oh! oh!* The Second Folio has *dead dead* for the second *dead*. The Third and Fourth Folios accept this last reading, but substitute *Desdemona* for *Desdemona*.

*Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO carried in a chair, and  
Officers with IAGO, prisoner*

LOD. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

OTH. That's he that was Othello: here I am.

LOD. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

OTH. I look down towards his feet; but that's a  
fable.

If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee. 290

*[Wounds Iago.]*

LOD. Wrench his sword from him.

IAGO. I bleed, sir, but not kill'd.

OTH. I am not sorry neither: I 'ld have thee live;  
For, in my sense, 't is happiness to die.

LOD. O thou Othello, that wert once so good,  
Fall'n in the practice of a damned slave,  
What shall be said to thee?

OTH. Why, any thing:  
An honourable murderer, if you will;  
For nought did I in hate, but all in honour.

LOD. This wretch hath part confess'd his villany:  
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death? 30

OTH. Ay.

CAS. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

OTH. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.  
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil  
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

289 *I look down . . . fable]* a reference to the story that the Devil has  
cloven feet.

290 *I cannot kill thee]* a reference to the belief that devils are immortal.

295 *practice]* treacherous plot.

IAGO. Demand me nothing; what you know, you know:

From this time forth I never will speak word.

LOD. What, not to pray?

GRA. Torments will ope your lips.

OTH. Well, thou dost best.

LOD. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n, 310  
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter  
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,  
And here another: the one of them imports  
The death of Cassio to be undertook  
By Roderigo.

OTH. O villain!

CAS. Most heathenish and most gross!

LOD. Now here's another discontented paper,  
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,  
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;  
But that, belike, Iago in the interim 320  
Came in and satisfied him.

OTH. O the pernicious caitiff!  
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief  
That was my wife's?

CAS. I found it in my chamber:  
And he himself confess'd but even now  
That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose  
Which wrought to his desire.

OTH. O fool! fool! fool!

CAS. There is besides in Roderigo's letter,  
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him  
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came



That I was cast: and even but now he spake 330  
After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,  
Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us:  
Your power and your command is taken off,  
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,  
If there be any cunning cruelty  
That can torment him much and hold him long,  
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,  
Till that the nature of your fault be known  
To the Venetian state. Come, bring away. 340

OTH. Soft you; a word or two before you go.  
I have done the state some service, and they know 't.  
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak  
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;  
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,  
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away 350

330 *cast*] dismissed. Cf. I, i, 150, *supra*.

348-349 *but . . . extreme*] but one who being wrought upon or incited to suspicion is distracted to despair.

350 *Like the base Indian . . . pearl away*] All the early editions read *Indian* here, except the First Folio, which has *Iudean*. No satisfactory explanation of the First Folio reading, which ruins the metre, has been given, and it may reasonably be treated as a misprint. References to the indifference of American Indians to the value of precious stones and gold abound in Elizabethan literature. Cf. Nashe's *Pierce Peni-lesse* (1592, ed. McKerrow, Vol. I, p. 241): "like the *Indians*, that

Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,  
 Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
 Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
 Their medicinal gum. Sit you down this;  
 And say besides that in Aleppo once,  
 Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk  
 Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog  
 And smote him, thus.

[Stabs himself.]

LOD. O bloody period!

GRA.

All that's spoke is marr'd. 360

have store of gold and pretious stones at command, yet are ignorant of their value," and Drayton's *Legend of Matilda (England's Heroical Epistles)*: "the wretched Indian spurns the golden ore."

353-354 *the Arabian trees . . . gum*] apparently the Arabian acacia tree, which exudes what is known as "gum-arabic." The process of exudation was said to be confined to the night. Cf. Greene's *Mourning Garment* [1590] (works, ed. Grosart, Vol. IX, p. 139): "The *Arabian tree* that yields no gum but in the darke night." Othello's "Arabian trees" are quite distinct from the "one tree" in "Arabia" (*Temp.*, III, iii, 22-23) which seems to be the palm; cf. *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, line 2: "the sole *Arabian tree*."

354 *medicinal*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Medicinable*, which is used by Shakespeare in four other places in the sense of "medicinal." Cf. *Much Ado*, II, ii, 5, *Troil. and Cress.*, I, iii, 91, III, iii, 44, *Cymb.*, III, ii, 33.

355 *Aleppo*] The Venetians had special trading privileges in Aleppo and were frequent visitors there.

357 *the state*] the Venetian republic.

358-359 *I took . . . smote him*] A bold act, for immediate death was the punishment of a Christian who struck a Turk in Turkish territory.

360 *All that's . . . marr'd*] Words are incapable of describing the horror of the scene.

OTH. I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this,  
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [*Falls on the bed, and dies.*]

CAS. This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;  
For he was great of heart.

LOD. [*To Iago*] O Spartan dog,  
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!  
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;  
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;  
Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house,  
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,  
For they succeed on you. To you, lord governor, 370  
Remains the censure of this hellish villain,  
The time, the place, the torture: O, enforce it!  
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state  
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [*Exeunt.*]

364 *great of heart*] of great courage.

*Spartan dog*] Spartan hounds were noted for their savage pertinacity  
in pursuing their prey.

368 *keep the house*] set guard upon the house.

369 *seize upon*] take legal possession of.

371 *censure*] judgment.

374 *heavy*] sorrowful.





